

A LEARNER'S GUIDE

# Speak English Now

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*Stop Translating, Beat the Fear,  
and Talk with Confidence in 90 Days*

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ENVERSON AI

## **Speak English Now**

Stop Translating, Beat the Fear, and Talk with Confidence in 90 Days

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This book adapts, for the independent learner, a teaching method developed over a six-year study of more than 8,000 students — including the Stopwatch Method, timed translation practice, and habit-based daily speaking. The companion volume for teachers is *The Fluency Stopwatch*.

The guidance in this book is for educational purposes. Results vary from person to person depending on starting level, native language, time invested, and consistency. The “90 days” in the subtitle describes a realistic path for a committed daily learner—not a guarantee.

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*For everyone who has studied English for years  
and still whispers, “I understand—  
but I can’t speak.”*

*This book is your permission to begin.*

*“You don’t learn to speak and then talk.  
You talk, and that is how you learn to speak.”*

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# Read This First

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## YES—THIS MEANS YOU

**L**et me guess. You have studied English for years. You can read it. You can understand films, more or less, with subtitles. You know more grammar than some native speakers. And yet, the moment someone turns to you and asks a simple question—“*So, tell me about yourself*”—your mind goes white, your heart speeds up, and the words that were right there a second ago vanish. You manage a few broken phrases, apologize, and promise yourself you’ll “study more.”

Here is the truth no textbook told you: **you do not have a knowledge problem. You have a speaking problem.** And those are two completely different things. Speaking is not something you *know*—it is something you *do*, like swimming or driving. You would never expect to swim well by reading a book about swimming. Yet that is exactly how most of us were taught to “speak” English: by reading, memorizing, and filling in blanks, while almost never opening our mouths.

This book fixes that. It is built on a method tested on more than eight thousand learners over six years—the same method that has taken students from halting, translated speech to confident conversation in a matter of months. But here I have rewritten it for one person: **you, practicing on your own.** You don’t need a perfect teacher, a language partner, or even another person in the room to start. You need a watch, a few minutes a day, and the willingness to sound imperfect for a while.

A few promises about how this book works:

- **Speed before perfection.** You will learn to talk fast and freely *first*, and polish later. This is the opposite of how you were taught—and it is why it works.

- **Small daily reps.** Ten focused minutes a day beats a three-hour cram once a week. Every chapter ends with something you can actually do today.
- **Measure everything.** You'll count your words, time yourself, and watch your numbers climb. Progress you can see is progress you'll keep chasing.
- **No shame.** Mistakes are not failures here. They are the sound of someone learning to speak.

You can read this book cover to cover, or jump straight to Chapter 5 and start the Stopwatch Method tonight. Either way, do not just read it. The reader who finishes this book and never speaks will sound exactly the same in a year. The one who does the exercises—even badly, even nervously—will sound like a different person.

Your silence has lasted long enough. Let's break it.

— *Aslan Məmmədli*  
*Enverson AI, 2026*



PART ONE

# Why You Can't Speak Yet

*It isn't your memory, your accent, or your talent.  
It's three habits nobody ever taught you to break.*

CHAPTER ONE

## The Wall in Your Throat

*Why you freeze when it's time to speak—and why it is not your fault.*

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**P**icture this. You are standing in line for coffee in a new city. The person behind the counter smiles and asks, "What can I get you?" In your head, you know the answer. You have known the words "I would like a coffee, please" for years. You have read them. You have written them on a hundred grammar tests. But now, in this small, ordinary moment, something strange happens. Your heart speeds up. Your mouth goes dry. The words climb up your throat—and stop. They hit a wall. You point at the menu instead. You say, "This one." You feel your face go warm.

If you have ever lived that moment, I want you to hear me clearly: you are not broken. You are not slow. You are not bad at languages. What you felt was a wall in your throat, and that wall is real. Almost every learner meets it. The good news—and this whole book is built on it—is that the wall can come down. Not in years. In weeks. But first you need to understand what the wall actually is, because most people misunderstand it completely.

## **The Moment Everyone Knows**

Let me describe the freeze, because I think you will recognize yourself in it. Someone asks you a simple question in English. Inside your mind, a small panic starts. You begin building the perfect sentence. You check the grammar. You search for the "best" word. You translate from your own language, word by word. And while you are busy doing all of this, time passes—three seconds, five seconds, ten. The other person waits. Their smile gets a little nervous. And the longer you wait, the worse the panic gets. Finally you give up and say something tiny, or nothing at all.

Here is the cruel part. Later that night, alone in your room, the perfect sentence arrives. It floats into your head, easy and complete. "Why couldn't I say that?" you think. "I knew it the whole time!" And you did know it. That is exactly the problem we are going to solve. The knowledge was never missing. Something else was.

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Over six years, this method was tested with more than 8,000 students. Almost every single one described the same freeze: the dry mouth, the racing heart, the perfect words that arrive too late. Doctors, engineers, students, parents—people who had studied English for ten or fifteen years—all hit the same wall. You are not the exception. You are the rule. And the rule has a solution.

## It Is Not What You Think It Is

When you freeze, your brain tells you a story. The story usually sounds like this: "I freeze because I don't know enough English. I need more words. More grammar. More rules. When I finally know enough, I will be able to speak." So you buy another grammar book. You learn another list of words. And the wall stays exactly where it was.

I want to tell you the truth, even though it may surprise you. Your freezing is almost never a knowledge problem. And it is definitely not a talent problem. You do not lack a special "language gene" that other people have. The real reason you freeze is much simpler, and much more hopeful: **speaking is a skill, and you have not practiced the skill.** You have practiced knowing. You have not practiced doing. Those are two completely different things.

*“You don't freeze because you know too little. You freeze because you have practiced knowing instead of doing.”*

## Swimming, Driving, and the Trap of Studying

Let me give you the picture that makes everything click. Imagine a person who wants to swim. They are serious about it. They buy three thick books about swimming. They read about the arm movements. They study the science of how water holds you up. They watch a hundred videos of

Olympic swimmers. They can explain every stroke perfectly. They could pass any swimming exam in the world.

Now we throw them into a pool. What happens? They sink. Of course they sink! Knowing about swimming and being able to swim are not the same thing. The only way to learn to swim is to get in the water, move your arms, swallow a little water, feel scared, and do it again tomorrow. Reading more books will never teach your body to float.

Driving is the same. You can memorize the whole traffic rulebook and still stall the car the first time you sit behind the wheel. Your hands need to learn. Your feet need to learn. That learning only happens by driving, not by reading about driving. We all accept this for swimming and driving. Nobody says, "I am just not talented at swimming, so I will read one more book." But with English, we forget the rule completely.

Speaking English is a physical skill, just like swimming and just like driving. It uses your mouth, your breath, your tongue, your timing. It needs your brain to pull words out fast, while you are listening, while you are thinking, while a real person looks at you. No amount of silent reading can train that. You can only train speaking by speaking. This is the single most important idea in this book, so let me say it plainly: **skills are built by doing, not by knowing.**



## Two Englishes: The One You Know and the One You Use

Here is a helpful way to think about it. You actually have two different Englishes inside you.

The first one is your **passive English**. This is the English you understand. When you read it, you get it. When you hear it in a film, you follow it. When you see the word, you know its meaning. This English is large. After

years of study, it is probably much bigger than you believe. You are sitting on a mountain of English right now.

The second one is your **active English**. This is the English you can actually produce, out loud, in the moment, without warning. This is the English that comes out of your mouth when the coffee person asks, "What can I get you?" For most learners, this active English is tiny—far smaller than the passive one. And the gap between the two is exactly where the freeze lives.

Think of a kitchen. Your passive English is a huge pantry, full of food—shelves and shelves of words and grammar you have collected over the years. Your active English is the meal you can cook in five minutes when a guest is suddenly standing in your kitchen. Having a full pantry feels great. But if you have never practiced cooking quickly, all that food does not help you when the guest is hungry and waiting. Speaking practice is cooking practice. It moves food from the pantry to the plate.

#### **TRY THIS NOW**

Put down this book for sixty seconds. Set a timer on your phone. Now, out loud—really out loud, with your actual voice—describe your morning. What you ate, where you went, how you felt. Don't stop to fix mistakes. Don't translate. Just keep talking until the timer rings.

Was it harder than you expected? Did you pause, search for words, feel that little wall? Good. You just found the exact muscle this book will train. And notice: you understood every word I wrote here easily. That gap—between easy understanding and hard speaking—is the whole game.

## **Why Years of Study Did Not Fix This**

Now you may be thinking, "But I studied so hard! I did everything right!" You probably did. And that is why this is not your fault. The way most of us were taught English was excellent for building passive English and almost useless for building active English.

Think about a normal English class or textbook. You read passages. You fill in the blanks. You match words to pictures. You learn grammar rules and do exercises about them. You take tests where you choose A, B, or C. All of this is quiet. All of this gives you time to think. All of this lets you check and fix before anyone sees your answer.

But real speaking is the opposite of all of that. Real speaking is loud. It is fast. It gives you no time to check. There is no eraser. The person in front of you is waiting right now, not in five minutes. So when you finally try to speak, your brain is using muscles it never trained. It is like training for years on a quiet, still bicycle in your bedroom, and then being shocked that you wobble on a real road with real traffic. You trained the wrong skill. Not because you were lazy—because nobody put you on the road.

So please, set down the guilt. The slowness you feel is not a sign that you are bad at English. It is a sign that your active English simply has not been exercised yet. A muscle that has never lifted anything is weak. That is not a flaw in the muscle. It just needs reps.

*“You already know far more English than you can use. The job is not to learn more—it is to free what you have.”*

## **The Three Habits We Are Going to Break**

If the freeze is a skill problem, then we fix it the way we fix any skill: with the right practice, done a little every day. Across this book, we will train that skill from many angles. But almost everything comes back to breaking three habits that are quietly holding your active English prisoner. Let me name them now, so you know where we are going.

### **Habit One: Translating in Your Head**

Right now, when you speak, you probably build the sentence in your own language first, then translate it into English, word by word. This feels safe.

But it is slow, and it produces strange sentences, because languages do not match word for word. While you translate, the wall rises and the panic grows. We are going to teach you to think directly in English—to go straight from idea to English, with no stop in the middle. This sounds impossible now. It is not. It is just unpracticed.

## Habit Two: Forgetting

You learn a word on Monday. By Friday it is gone. This is normal—the brain throws away anything it does not use. The problem is that quiet study uses words only once, so they fade fast. We will fix this with small, daily practice that keeps pulling words back out of your memory and putting them in your mouth. Words you speak are words you keep.

## Habit Three: Fear of Mistakes

This is the biggest one. Somewhere along the way, you learned that a mistake is something shameful, something to avoid at any cost. So you stay silent, because silence makes no mistakes. But silence also makes no progress. Here is a new rule to live by: **mistakes are normal, and mistakes are how you learn.** Babies learn to speak by getting it wrong a thousand times. So do swimmers, drivers, and every confident speaker you admire. In this book, mistakes are not failures. They are the sound of you actually trying. We will turn the fear down until it cannot stop your mouth anymore.



## Speed Before Perfection

Let me give you one taste of the method now, so you can feel where we are headed. Most learners chase perfection. They want every sentence to be correct before it leaves their mouth. That chase is exactly what builds the wall. So we are going to flip it. We will chase **speed first, and let perfection come later.**

Later in the book you will meet the Stopwatch Method, which is the heart of this whole system. The idea is simple and a little bit fun. You time yourself speaking for one minute, you count your words, and you try to beat your own record the next day. Most learners start at around 40 or 50 words a minute—slow, full of pauses. With practice, you climb to 90 words a minute and beyond. As the speed goes up, something wonderful happens: there is no longer time to translate, no time to panic, no time for the wall to rise. Speed itself becomes the cure. ("Beat your record" is an idiom; it just means do better than your best result so far.)

Speed sits at the center of what we call the five rules of bold speaking: speak faster, express emotion, speak louder, be accurate, and avoid long pauses. Notice the order. "Be accurate" is on the list—accuracy matters—but it is not first. First we get you moving. A river that flows can be guided. A frozen river cannot.

#### **TRY THIS NOW**

One more tiny experiment, and this one is a promise to your future self. Say this sentence out loud, right now, with your real voice and a little bit of feeling: "I can already understand a lot of English, and starting today, I am going to practice speaking it every single day."

Say it twice. Say it a little louder the second time. That is your first rep. That is the first small brick removed from the wall. Tomorrow you will remove another. In ninety days, there will be no wall left to climb.

## **Why This Time Is Different**

Maybe you have started learning English many times before. Maybe a small, tired voice is saying, "I have tried, and it never worked." I understand that voice. But hear this. Every time before, you were probably trying to learn *more*—more words, more rules, more knowledge piled onto a pantry that was already full. This time, we are not adding to the pantry. This time, we are teaching you to cook. We are taking the enormous English you already own and finally setting it free through your mouth.

And the method is small. That is the secret. You do not need three free hours a day. You need a few honest minutes, every day, of actual speaking out loud—tracking your words, beating your record, allowing your mistakes, and refusing to stay silent. Daily micro-practice beats heroic effort that you do once and quit. A little, every day, changes everything. Drops of water carve through stone not by being powerful, but by being faithful.

The wall in your throat was never made of stone. It was made of habit—the habit of translating, the habit of forgetting, the habit of fearing mistakes. Habits are built, and habits can be replaced. You built the wall without meaning to. Now, on purpose, brick by brick, we are going to take it down. Turn the page. Your voice has been waiting a long time. It is time to let it out.

#### **REMEMBER THIS**

- Freezing when you speak is normal. Almost every learner feels the wall in the throat. You are not broken, slow, or untalented.
- Speaking is a skill, like swimming or driving. Skills are built by doing, not by knowing. You can only learn to speak by speaking.
- You have two Englishes: a big passive one you understand, and a small active one you can use out loud. The gap between them is where the freeze lives.
- Traditional study (reading, grammar, fill-in-the-blanks) builds passive English, not active English. That is why years of study did not free your mouth—and it is not your fault.
- You already know far more English than you can use. The goal is not to learn more, but to release what you have.
- This book breaks three habits: translating in your head, forgetting words, and fearing mistakes. Mistakes are how you learn.
- Speed before perfection. A few honest minutes of speaking out loud every day—daily micro-practice—changes everything.

## CHAPTER TWO

# The Translation Trap

*The silent habit that makes you slow—and how to feel it happening.*

---

**P**icture this. Someone asks you a simple question in English. "So, what did you do this weekend?" Easy question. You know the answer. And yet, for a moment, you freeze. Your eyes drift up to the ceiling. Inside your head, a tiny machine starts running. You build the sentence in your own language first—"Hmm, on the weekend I went to my friend's house"—and then you start swapping each word for an English one. By the time the words finally come out of your mouth, three seconds have passed. The other person is already wondering if you understood the question.

That little pause has a name. I call it the Translation Trap. It is the most common habit I see in learners, and it is the quiet reason so many smart people feel slow when they speak. You are not slow. Your brain is just doing extra work that it does not need to do. In this chapter, we are going to catch that habit in the act. Once you can feel it happening, you can begin to break it.

## What translating in your head actually looks like

Most learners do not even notice they are doing it. It feels normal, like breathing. So let us slow it down and look at the steps, one by one. When someone asks you something and you translate, here is what really happens inside your mind:

First, you hear the English. Second, you understand it (often by quietly turning it into your own language). Third, you think of your answer—but you think of it in your native language. Fourth, you take that native sentence and convert it, word by word, into English. Fifth, you check it: "Is this correct? Is the grammar right?" And only then, sixth, do you finally speak.

Six steps. Six! A native speaker uses about two: hear, answer. You are climbing a staircase while they are taking the elevator. No wonder you arrive tired.

There are signs you can spot, almost like clues a detective looks for. The eyes look up and to the side, searching for words that are not there. There is a small silence before you start—not a thinking-about-the-idea silence, but a building-the-sentence silence. Sometimes your lips move a little. Sometimes you start a sentence, stop, and start again because the order of the words did not match English. ("I have... no... There is...") These are not signs that you are bad at English. They are signs that you are translating.

#### **TRY THIS NOW**

Right now, answer this out loud: "What did you eat today?" Speak the full answer in English. Done? Good. Now answer it a second time, but this time pay attention only to your own mind. Did a sentence in your first language appear before the English came out? Did your eyes move up? Did you feel a small pause where you were "converting"? Do not judge it. Just notice it. That noticing is the whole point. You cannot fix a habit you cannot feel.

## **Why translating makes you slow and tired**

Here is the simplest way to understand the problem. Your brain has a limited amount of attention, like a phone with limited battery. When you translate, you are running two heavy apps at the same time: one app builds the idea in your language, and a second app converts it into English. Both apps drain the battery. That is why a twenty-minute conversation in English can leave you as tired as a long day at work. You were doing double the work for the same result.

Speed is the second problem. A real conversation moves fast. People do not wait politely while you finish your inner translation. By the time you have built the perfect sentence in your head and converted it, the moment has often passed. The topic has changed. The joke is over. You had the right thing to say—you were just five seconds too late. (We have all felt that. You

think of the perfect reply on the bus ride home. The French even have a phrase for it: *l'esprit de l'escalier*, "the wit of the staircase," meaning the clever thing you think of only after you have left.)

The third problem is that translation makes your English sound unnatural. Languages are not the same shape. When you translate word for word, you carry the grammar and the expressions of your first language into English, and they do not always fit. You end up with sentences that are "correct" in your head but strange to an English ear. The words are right, but the music is wrong.

*“You are not a slow speaker. You are a fast translator. The goal is to stop translating —not to translate faster.”*

Read that pull quote again, because many learners get this exactly backwards. They think, "If I just practice translating more, I'll get quicker at it." But that is like trying to win a race by tying your shoes faster. The real win is to not tie them at all—to speak English directly, with no translation step in the middle. That is the whole journey of this book.



## **Why you can't just "decide" to stop**

Now, you might be thinking: "Okay, I understand. From now on, I simply will not translate." I love the energy. But it will not work, and I want to be honest with you about why.

Translating is not a choice you are making. It is an automatic habit. Think about driving a car or riding a bike. After enough practice, you do not think, "Now I press the brake." Your foot just moves. The skill became automatic, which means it happens below your conscious control. Translation is the same. Your brain has practiced it thousands of times, so now it fires in-

stantly, before you can stop it. Telling yourself "don't translate" is like telling yourself "don't blink"—the harder you try, the more you notice it, and it still happens.

This is good news, actually. It means the problem is not your willpower or your talent. It is just a well-worn path in your brain, like a trail in the grass that everyone has walked on so many times the dirt shows through. You do not remove a trail by shouting at it. You remove it by walking a new way, again and again, until the old path grows over and a new one appears.

So if deciding does not work, what does? This is where the method comes in.

## **The secret: remove the time, and translation disappears**

Here is the key idea of this whole book, and I want you to remember it: **translation needs time. Take away the time, and the translation cannot happen.**

Think about it. Building a sentence in your language and converting it takes a few seconds. If those few seconds are available, your brain will use them—every time, automatically. But what if the seconds are not there? What if you have to answer *right now*, with no gap at all? Then your brain has no room to translate. It is forced to find another way. And that other way is to reach straight for the English words you already know.

This is the heart of what I call the **Stopwatch Method**. We will go deep into it later in the book, but here is the simple preview. You give yourself a tiny time limit—answer in two seconds, then one second, then almost instantly. The pressure of the clock does something wonderful: it leaves no time for the translation app to open. At first this feels uncomfortable, even a little scary. Your sentences come out shorter and simpler. That is fine. That is the point. Remember the first rule we keep returning to in this book: *speed before perfection*. A simple sentence spoken in one second beats a perfect sentence that arrives five seconds too late.

When you practice this way, something shifts. Over days and weeks, your brain learns that the translation step is too slow to be useful, so it stops bothering. It builds a new, direct path: idea straight to English. That path is the goal. The stopwatch is just the tool that forces the path to grow.

#### **WHY THE CLOCK WORKS**

Imagine you are at a market and the seller says, "Make me an offer—you have three seconds!" You would not carefully plan. You would blurt out the first number that came to mind. The time pressure skips the slow, careful part of your brain and forces a fast, direct answer. The Stopwatch Method does exactly this for your English. It does not make you smarter. It makes you faster, and faster is what kills the translation habit.

## **A self-test: catch yourself in the act**

Before you can change a habit, you have to become a good spy on yourself. Here is a small test you can run any time you speak English this week. After a conversation, or even after a single sentence, ask yourself three quick questions:

### **1. Did I see my own language first?**

Be honest. Before the English came out, was there a sentence in your native language sitting in your mind? If yes, you translated. If the English just appeared on its own, you did not. Most learners are surprised by how often the answer is yes.

### **2. Was there a pause that felt like "converting"?**

There are two kinds of pauses. One is thinking about *what* to say (the idea). That is normal—even native speakers do it. The other is thinking about *how* to say it in English (the conversion). That second kind is the translation pause. Learn to tell them apart. The conversion pause often comes with the eyes drifting up.

### **3. Did my sentence follow my language's order?**

If your English sentence came out in a strange order, or you had to stop and rearrange it mid-way, that is a clue. Your brain was following the map of your first language, not English.

You do not need to pass this test perfectly. You just need to run it. Every time you catch yourself, you are building awareness—and awareness is the first crack in the wall.



## Your first tiny exercise: name things directly

Let us end with a small, gentle starter exercise. It is so easy you have no excuse to skip it, and it is the first brick in your new direct path. It is called **Direct Naming**.

Look around the room you are in right now. Point your attention at one object—say, a chair. Now say the English word out loud: "chair." Here is the only rule: do not let your first language appear in your mind at all. Do not think the word in your language and then translate it. Just look at the object and let the English word come straight out. Object, then English. No middle step.

Do this with ten objects around you. Table. Window. Cup. Door. Phone. Light. Wall. Book. Hand. Floor. Go fast—one second per object. If your native word sneaks in, no problem, just keep going. The speed will push it out.

Why does this work? Because naming a single object is small enough that your brain can do it directly, with no translation. You are teaching your mind the feeling of going straight from the world to English. That feeling—idea to English with nothing in between—is exactly the feeling you will later build into full sentences. You are not learning new words here. You are practicing a new *route*.

Do this little exercise once a day this week. Thirty seconds is enough. This is the daily micro-practice we will build on throughout the book: tiny,

easy, every day. Small bricks, laid daily, build a strong wall. You do not need an hour. You need a habit.

In the next chapter, we will take this direct feeling and start putting the stopwatch to work, so you can feel the speed for yourself. But for now, just remember the big idea: the translation in your head is not a flaw in you—it is a habit with a weakness. Its weakness is time. Take the time away, and it falls apart.

#### **REMEMBER THIS**

- Translating in your head means building a sentence in your first language and converting it to English. It happens in a tiny pause, often with your eyes looking up.
- It makes you slow and tired because your brain runs two jobs at once—and by the time you finish converting, the moment has passed.
- You can't simply decide to stop. It's an automatic habit, like braking a car. Willpower alone won't remove it.
- Translation needs time to happen. Remove the time, and it disappears. This is the secret behind the Stopwatch Method.
- Run the self-test: Did my own language appear first? Was there a "converting" pause? Did my sentence follow my language's order?
- Start today with Direct Naming: look at objects around you and say the English word straight—no middle step, one second each.
- Speed before perfection. A simple sentence on time beats a perfect one that's too late.

## CHAPTER THREE

# Why the Words Keep Disappearing

*You learn a word on Monday and lose it by Wednesday. Here's why—and how to make words stay.*

---

**L**et me guess. Yesterday you sat down and studied. You found a great new word. You wrote it in your notebook. You felt proud. "This time," you said, "I will remember it." Today someone asks you that exact word in conversation, and your brain shows you... nothing. A blank wall. The word is gone, like a sock that disappears in the laundry.

First, take a deep breath. This does not mean you have a bad memory. It does not mean you are too old, too slow, or "just not a language person." What happened to you is one of the most normal, most studied, most human things in the world. Every learner on the planet goes through it—including the 8,000-plus students who learned to speak with this method. The disappearing word is not a personal failure. It is a pattern. And once you understand the pattern, you can beat it.

## The Leaky Bucket

Imagine your memory is a bucket. Every time you study, you pour water into it. New words, new phrases, new grammar—splash, splash, splash. The bucket fills up. You feel great.

But here is the problem. The bucket has small holes in the bottom. The moment you stop pouring, the water starts to drain out. Slowly at first, then faster. By the next day, a lot of your water is already gone. Not because the bucket is broken, but because that is simply how buckets work. (And how brains work.)

This is the famous "forgetting curve." More than a hundred years ago, a researcher named Hermann Ebbinghaus tested his own memory again and again. He found something both scary and useful: we forget new informa-

tion shockingly fast. Without any review, people forget up to **80 percent** of what they studied within about **48 hours**. Two days. Most of it—gone.

Read that again, because it changes everything. If you study a list of twenty words tonight and do nothing else, by the day after tomorrow you may keep only four of them. Sixteen words leaked out of the bucket. You did not waste your time exactly, but you let most of your effort drip away.

*“You don't have a bad memory. You have a leaky schedule. Fix the schedule, and the words stay.”*

## **It Happens to Everyone—Yes, Everyone**

Let me say this clearly, because so many learners carry it like a heavy bag on their shoulders: *forgetting is not your fault*. It is not proof that you are slow. It is not a sign that your brain is "worse" than other people's brains. The same forgetting curve runs inside the head of every doctor, every lawyer, every famous actor, and yes, every fluent English speaker you admire. They forget just as fast as you do. The only difference is what they do about it.

Think about your own first language. As a child, did you learn every word the first time you heard it? Of course not. You heard "spoon" a hundred times before it stuck. You heard your own name thousands of times. Nobody handed you a list and expected you to remember it overnight. You learned through repetition, through use, through saying things out loud again and again. English is no different. You are not broken. You are just human, and humans need repetition.

So please drop the guilt. Guilt does not help you remember a single word. It only makes you want to close the book and walk away. Instead of "Why can't I remember anything?" try a kinder, truer question: "When is the best time for me to come back to this word?" That small change in thinking is the start of everything.

## Forgetting Is a Feature, Not a Bug

Here is something that may surprise you: forgetting is actually your brain being smart. Your brain is flooded with information every second—sounds, colors, smells, that song stuck in your head. If it kept everything forever, it would be a noisy mess. So your brain makes a quiet decision about each new thing: "Is this important? Will I need it again?"

If you see a word once and never touch it again, your brain assumes the answer is no. "She doesn't need this," it thinks, and it lets the word drain away to make room. This is your brain doing its job. The trick is not to fight your brain. The trick is to *send it a different message*. You want your brain to say: "Wait—she keeps coming back to this word. She keeps using it. This must be important. Let's keep it."

How do you send that message? Two ways. You **review** the word at the right times, and—much more powerful—you **use** the word out loud. Let's take them one at a time.

### The Fix, Part One: Review at the Right Times

Most learners review in the worst possible way. They study a list on Monday, then look at it again two weeks later when they happen to find the notebook. By then everything has already leaked out, so they are basically learning it for the first time again. Exhausting. No wonder people quit.

The smart way is called **spaced review**. The idea is simple: review a word a little while after you learn it, then again a bit later, then again at a longer gap, and again later still. Each time you successfully pull the word out of your memory, you patch one of the holes in the bucket. The water drains more slowly. The word stays longer. And each review takes less and less effort.

Think of it like watering a small plant. You don't pour a whole bucket on it once a month and hope. You give it a little water often, especially in the beginning. Over time the roots grow deep, and the plant needs you less and less.

Here is a simple rhythm you can actually follow. You do not need an app or a fancy system to start. You just need to come back to a new word at these moments:

### TRY THIS NOW

Pick **three** words or short phrases you want to keep. Right now, do the first review: cover the meaning, look only at the word, and say it in a full sentence out loud. ("Reliable—my friend is very reliable, he is never late.") Then write a tiny schedule next to each word: **today / tomorrow / in 3 days / in a week**. Put a check mark each time you come back. That is your whole system. It takes thirty seconds and it beats re-reading a list ten times.

Notice the rhythm: **today, tomorrow, in 3 days, in about a week**. The gaps get bigger on purpose. Early on, the word is fragile, so you check on it often. Once it survives a few reviews, it is stronger, so you can leave longer gaps. If you forget a word during a review, no problem—just shorten the gap and start that word's schedule again. Forgetting during review is not failure; it is the exact moment your memory gets stronger.

## The Fix, Part Two: Use the Word, Don't Just Look at It

Now for the most important part of this chapter. There are two very different things people call "reviewing," and they are not equal. One is weak. One is powerful.

**Passive review** is reading the list again. Your eyes move over the words. You think, "Yes, yes, I know that one," and you move on. It feels like studying. It feels comfortable. But here is the trap: recognizing a word is not the same as remembering it. When you read "negotiate" and the meaning is sitting right next to it, of course you "know" it. Your brain did no work. You just confirmed something that was already on the screen. That is why you can read a list five times and still freeze when you need the word in a real conversation.

**Active use** is different. Active use means you close the notebook and pull the word out of your own head—and then say it out loud in a sentence. "I want to negotiate a better price." Now your brain had to do real work: find the word, build a sentence around it, and move your mouth to produce the sounds. That effort is exactly what tells your brain, "Keep this one." Active use builds the path from your memory to your mouth—which is the whole point, because you are not learning English to recognize it. You are learning English to *speak* it.

*“Reading a word again is like watching someone lift weights. Saying it out loud is doing the lifting yourself.”*

Here is a small but huge difference in practice. Passive learner sees the word "though" and nods. Active learner says: "It was raining. I went for a walk, though." Out loud. In a real sentence. The active learner just did in five seconds what the passive learner could not do in five readings. By the way, "though" here is a little word that means something like "but" or "however," and it loves to sit at the end of a sentence—a perfect example of a word you will never truly own until you say it yourself.

This connects to the big ideas of this whole method. Speak with speed before you worry about being perfect. Use the Stopwatch Method—give yourself sixty seconds to use your new words in sentences out loud, fast, no stopping to translate. Don't translate the word back to your language; instead, glue it to a real situation in English. When you do this, review and speaking practice become the same activity. You are not "studying" and "practicing" as two separate jobs. You are doing both at once, and your bucket stops leaking.

There is one more reason active use beats passive reading, and it is about confidence. When you only read words, you never find out if you can actually produce them. So a little voice inside whispers, "What if I freeze? What if I can't say it?" That fear grows in the dark. But every time you say a word

out loud—even alone, even quietly—you prove to yourself that you *can*. You take the fear out of the dark and into the light. By the time you meet a real person, your mouth has already practiced. The word does not feel new and scary. It feels like an old friend you have spoken to many times. That is how shy learners slowly become confident speakers: not by waiting to feel ready, but by saying the words until they *are* ready.

### **A quick word about flashcards and apps**

You may have heard of apps that use "spaced repetition." They are built on exactly the idea in this chapter—they show you a word right before you are about to forget it. These tools can be wonderful. But here is the catch many people miss: most of them test you silently. You see the word, you think the answer in your head, you tap a button. That is still half passive. If you use such an app, add one small rule that doubles its power: **say the answer out loud in a full sentence before you tap**. Don't just recall the meaning—produce a sentence with your mouth. That tiny habit turns a good tool into a great one, because it forces the active use that builds real speaking.

### **See the Difference for Yourself**

Let's make this concrete. Say you learn twenty new words today. The table below shows roughly what happens to them over one week. These are not exact lab numbers—your brain is not a calculator—but the pattern is real and it is dramatic.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO 20 NEW WORDS OVER ONE WEEK

When	No review (passive, then nothing)	Spaced review + active use out loud
Right after studying	20 words "known"	20 words known
Next day	~8 words left	~17 words, getting solid
After 2 days	~4 words left (about 80% gone)	~17 words, easy to recall
After 3 days	~3 words left	~18 words, said out loud easily
After 1 week	~2 words left	~18–19 words, ready to use in real talk

Look at the two columns side by side. Same brain. Same twenty words. Same person—you. The only difference is the schedule and the speaking. One path leaves you with two lonely words after a week. The other leaves you with almost all of them, and—this is key—words you can actually *say*, not just recognize. You did not become smarter. You just stopped throwing your effort into a leaky bucket.

## Why the First 48 Hours Matter Most

Look closely at the table again and you will spot something important. The biggest drop in the "no review" column happens fast—within the first day or two. That is when most of your words run for the exit. This tells you exactly where to spend your energy: **the first 48 hours are golden.**

A review on the same day you learn a word, and another the very next day, does more good than ten reviews two weeks later. Why? Because you are patching the holes while the water is still in the bucket. Wait two weeks, and there is almost no water left to save—you are starting over. So if you only have time for a tiny bit of review, do it early. A two-minute review tonight on the words you learned this morning is worth more than an hour of review next month. Catch the words before they fall.

This is also why "cramming" fails speakers so badly. You know cramming—studying everything in one long, painful session the night before you need it. ("Cram" means to stuff something into a small space, like cramming clothes into a full suitcase.) Cramming can pour a lot of water into the bucket quickly, but it does nothing about the holes. Two days later it has all leaked out. Spread the same time across several short sessions instead, and you keep far more—for a fraction of the pain.

## **Building It Into Your Day**

"This sounds like a lot of extra work," you might think. It is the opposite. Spaced review with active use is the *lazy* person's secret—it saves you time, because you stop relearning the same words over and over. A few small, well-timed reviews beat hours of re-reading every time.

Here is how to fit it into real life without changing your whole day:

### **Keep a tiny "speaking review" list**

Not a giant list of 200 words. A short list of the handful you met recently. Quality beats quantity. Five words you can say beat fifty you can only recognize.

### **Review out loud, in the cracks of your day**

Waiting for coffee, walking to the bus, standing in line—these are perfect thirty-second review moments. Look at a word (or just remember it), close your eyes, and say a sentence with it. Nobody has to hear you. Whisper if you must. The point is to move from your eyes to your mouth.

### **Always make a fresh sentence**

Don't repeat the same example you wrote down. Make a new sentence each time, ideally about your real life. "Reliable" today is about your friend; tomorrow it is about your phone; the next day about a bus that is never on time. New sentences force active use and keep the word flexible, so it is ready for any conversation.

## Trust the longer gaps

After a word survives a few days, leave it alone for a while. You are allowed to. If it is still there in a week, congratulations—it has moved into long-term storage. That word is now yours. Spend your fresh energy on new words instead.

One gentle warning. When you start, do not pour fifty new words into the bucket on day one and then panic when most leak out. That is normal—you simply gave yourself more than you could water. Fewer words, well reviewed and spoken out loud, will always beat a huge list you never touch again. Slow is smooth, and smooth is fast.

*“You don't need a better memory. You need a better schedule—and the courage to say the words out loud.”*

So the next time a word disappears on you, don't blame yourself and don't quit. Just smile and say, "Ah—the bucket is leaking again. Time to patch a hole." Come back to the word today, tomorrow, in three days, in a week. Say it out loud each time. Watch it stop running away from you. The words were never lost because of you. They were lost because nobody told you the schedule. Now you know it. Use it.

### REMEMBER THIS

- Forgetting is normal and human. Without review, you can lose up to 80 percent of new words within 48 hours—it is not a sign of a bad memory.
- Your memory is a leaky bucket. The fix is not more pouring; it is patching the holes with well-timed review.
- Use spaced review: come back to a new word **today, tomorrow, in 3 days, and in about a week**, with bigger gaps over time.
- Passive review (re-reading a list) is weak. Active use (saying the word in a fresh sentence out loud) is powerful—it builds the path from memory to mouth.
- If you forget a word during review, that is not failure. Shorten the gap and try again; that struggle is what makes the memory stick.
- You don't need a better memory. You need a better schedule.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# Perfect Is the Enemy of Spoken

*The fear of making mistakes is the single biggest thing keeping you silent. Let's kill it.*

---

**I**magine this. You are standing in a shop in another country. The person behind the counter asks you a simple question. You know the words. You have studied them many times. But in that moment, your mouth freezes. Your heart beats faster. A voice inside your head says, "What if I say it wrong? What if they laugh? What if I look stupid?" So you say nothing, or you just point, or you whisper one word and feel your face turn red. Later, walking home, you think of the perfect answer you could have given. Too late. The moment is gone.

If this has happened to you, I want you to know something. You are not weak. You are not bad at English. You are not the only one. This exact moment has happened to almost every learner I have ever taught, and I have taught more than eight thousand of them. The freezing is not a sign that your English is broken. It is a sign that fear is in the room. And fear, unlike grammar, is something we can deal with today, right now, in this chapter.

This is the last chapter of Part One, the mindset part of this book. After this, we start the real training. But I do not want you to walk into the practice carrying a heavy bag of fear on your back. So before we train your mouth, let's free your mind.

## The Real Fear Has a Name

Let's be honest about what you are actually afraid of. When you say, "My English is not good enough yet," that is usually not the real reason you stay silent. The real reason is hidden under it. The real fear is one of these:

You are afraid of **looking stupid**. You are afraid that someone will **judge you** for your accent or your mistakes. You are afraid of that small,

hot feeling of **embarrassment** when a word comes out wrong. You are afraid that the other person will think, "This person cannot even speak properly."

Notice something important. None of these fears are about English. They are all about other people's opinions of you. They are social fears, not language fears. And that is good news, because it means the problem is smaller than you thought. You do not need to fix your whole brain. You only need to change how much power you give to the imagined opinions of strangers.

*“You are not afraid of English. You are afraid of being judged. Those are very different problems, and the second one is mostly imaginary.”*

Here is a truth that took me years to understand. The judge you are most afraid of is not the shop worker, or your boss, or the stranger on the street. The judge is inside your own head. We call this voice the "inner critic." It is the little voice that says, "That sounded terrible," or "Everyone noticed your mistake." Most of the time, the other person did not even notice. They were thinking about their own day, their own problems, their own dinner. The harsh judge was you, all along.



## **The "When I'm Ready" Trap**

Many learners tell themselves a comfortable story. The story goes like this: "I will start speaking when my English is ready. First I will learn more grammar. First I will learn more words. First I will feel confident. *Then* I will speak."

This sounds wise and patient. It is actually a trap. Let me explain why, because this is one of the most important ideas in the whole book.

Confidence does not come before action. Confidence comes *from* action. You will never feel "ready" by reading one more book or watching one more video. The feeling of being ready is created by speaking, again and again, and surviving. You cannot think your way to confidence. You can only speak your way there.

Think about learning to swim. You cannot learn to swim by standing next to the pool and studying a book about swimming. You can read about water for ten years and still sink the first time you get in. At some point, you have to get wet. Speaking is the same. The water is conversation. Sooner or later, you have to get in. ("Get wet" here is an idiom that just means "actually do the thing instead of only preparing for it.")

So if you are waiting for the perfect moment, the perfect level, the perfect feeling, please hear me clearly: that moment will never come on its own. Waiting until you are perfect guarantees one thing, and one thing only. It guarantees that you will never speak.

#### TRY THIS NOW

Put this book down for sixty seconds. Out loud, in English, describe the room you are in right now. Say whatever comes. "There is a window. The wall is white. I am sitting on a chair. It is the evening." Do not stop to fix anything. Do not translate. Just keep your mouth moving for one full minute. When you finish, notice this: you spoke English, with mistakes, and nothing bad happened. That feeling of "nothing bad happened" is the feeling we are going to build on.

## Two Different Skills: Fluency and Accuracy

Here is an idea that changes everything for most of my students. Speaking is not one skill. It is two. And learners get stuck because they try to build both at the same time, which is almost impossible.

The first skill is **fluency**. Fluency means speaking freely, quickly, and without long pauses. It means your words flow. A fluent speaker keeps go-

ing even when a sentence is not perfect. Fluency is about *speed and flow*.

The second skill is **accuracy**. Accuracy means being correct. Right grammar, right word, right tense, right pronunciation. Accuracy is about *being polished*.

Now, here is the mistake almost everyone makes. They try to be accurate first. They build the sentence slowly in their head. They check the grammar. They search for the perfect word. They translate from their own language. And by the time the sentence is "perfect," ten seconds have passed, the conversation has moved on, and they have said nothing. They were so busy being correct that they forgot to be understood.

*“Build fluency first. Polish accuracy later.  
Trying to do both at once is why your  
mouth freezes.”*

You must build fluency *first*. Speak fast. Speak freely. Let the mistakes happen. Get the flow going. Then, much later, once speaking feels natural and easy, you slowly polish the accuracy. This is the same order children use when they learn their first language. A small child says "I goed to the park" and "I eated my dinner." These are mistakes. But the child is fluent, brave, and fast. Nobody stops the child and gives a grammar lesson. The accuracy comes later, on its own, through use. The order is fluency first, accuracy second. Always.

When you try to reverse the order, you build a slow, frightened speaker who knows a lot of grammar but cannot hold a real conversation. I am sure you have met people like this, or maybe you feel like one yourself. They "know" English but cannot speak it. The cause is almost always this: they chased accuracy and forgot to build fluency.



## Mistakes Are Data, Not Disasters

Let's change what a mistake means to you. Right now, you probably feel that a mistake is something shameful, a small failure, proof that you are not good enough. I want to give you a completely different picture.

A mistake is **data**. It is information. When you say a sentence and it comes out wrong, you have just learned something useful: *this* is an area to improve. A mistake is your practice showing you exactly where to point your attention next. Without mistakes, you would have no idea what to work on. Mistakes are not the enemy of learning. They are the map of learning.

A mistake is also **proof that you are trying**. People who never make mistakes in English are people who never speak English. Every single mistake you make is evidence that you opened your mouth, you took a risk, and you put yourself in the game. That is something to be proud of, not ashamed of. The silent learner makes zero mistakes and zero progress. The brave learner makes many mistakes and improves fast. Which one do you want to be?

And here is something that surprises many learners. **Native speakers make mistakes too**. All the time. They say "me and him went," they mix up words, they start a sentence and change it halfway, they say "um" and "uh," they forget the right word and say "you know, the thing." Native speech is full of small errors. Nobody is keeping score. Real conversation is messy for everyone. The idea of "perfect English" that lives in your head is a fantasy. Even the people you are afraid of judging you do not speak perfectly.

## People Listen for Meaning, Not Grammar

When you talk to a real human, here is what is actually happening in their mind. They are not grading your grammar like a strict teacher with a red pen. They are trying to understand *what you mean*. That is all. They

want to know what you need, what you think, what you feel. The grammar is just the vehicle that carries the meaning.

Think about how you treat people speaking your own language imperfectly. If a tourist comes to your city and says, in broken phrases, "Please... train station... where?" do you laugh at their grammar? Of course not. You feel kind. You point. You help. You are happy they tried. You understood them perfectly, even though the sentence was "wrong." That is exactly how people feel about you. The mistake you are so worried about is invisible to them, because they are too busy understanding your meaning.

This gives us a new standard, and it is the most freeing standard in language learning. Forget "perfect." Your new goal is **"good enough to be understood."** If the other person understood you, you succeeded. Full stop. It does not matter that you used the wrong tense or forgot an article. The message arrived. Communication happened. That is a win. Collect those wins.

#### TRY THIS NOW

Here is a strange and powerful exercise. For the next two minutes, speak English out loud and *try to make mistakes on purpose*. Talk about your day, but do not care about grammar at all. Use the wrong tense. Skip small words. Let it be messy and fast. The goal is to break the link between "mistake" and "fear" in your brain. When you make mistakes on purpose, you take away their power. You will notice something: a mistake is just a sound. It does not hurt. The sky does not fall. After this, real mistakes will feel much smaller.

## Quieting the Inner Critic

Let's go back to that voice in your head, the inner critic. It is the voice that says "you sound terrible" while you are still in the middle of speaking. This voice is the real enemy in this chapter, more than any stranger. Here is how to handle it.

First, **name it**. When the critical voice starts, notice it and say to yourself, "Ah, that is just the inner critic talking. It is not the truth. It is just a habit." Naming the voice creates a small space between you and the fear. You are not the fear. You are the person noticing the fear.

Second, **talk back to it**. When it says, "You are going to embarrass yourself," answer it: "Maybe. And even if I do, I will survive, and I will be a little braver next time." Embarrassment is not dangerous. It is just an uncomfortable feeling that passes in a few minutes. You have survived it many times before. You will survive it again.

Third, **change the question**. The inner critic loves the question, "What if I make a mistake?" Replace it with a better question: "What if I am understood?" Or even, "What is the worst that can really happen?" Usually the worst thing is a moment of mild awkwardness, and then life goes on. When you look directly at the worst case, you see how small it actually is.

*"The inner critic is loud, but it is not right.  
It has never once helped you speak better.  
It has only helped you stay silent."*



## Practical Mindset Shifts

Let me give you a handful of new beliefs to carry into Part Two. Read these slowly. Let them sink in. You can come back to this list whenever the old fear returns.

**"Done is better than perfect."** A sentence that you actually said, with mistakes, is worth far more than a perfect sentence you only thought about. Spoken beats perfect every time. That is the whole title of this chapter.

**"Every conversation is practice, not a test."** There is no grade. There is no examiner. There is no pass or fail. Each time you speak is simply

one more repetition that makes the next time easier. Stop treating life like an exam.

**"Mistakes today buy fluency tomorrow."** Each mistake is a small payment toward your future fluent self. The learners who improve fastest are the ones who are willing to be bad at first. They pay the price of looking imperfect, and they get fluency in return. It is the best deal in language learning.

**"My accent is not a problem."** You do not need to sound like someone born in London or New York. An accent is not a mistake. It is just a sound. People all over the world speak English with their own accents and communicate perfectly. Your accent is part of you. Keep it. Aim to be clear, not to disappear.

**"Courage is a muscle."** The first time you speak, it feels terrifying. The tenth time, less so. The hundredth time, it is almost normal. Bravery is not something you are born with. It grows every single time you choose to speak instead of stay silent. (When we say something "is a muscle," we mean it gets stronger the more you use it.)

## The Permission You Have Been Waiting For

So here it is. The permission. I want you to read the next lines as if I were sitting across from you, looking you in the eye.

You are allowed to speak badly. You are allowed to make mistakes. You are allowed to forget words, to use the wrong tense, to pause, to say "um," to start a sentence again. You are allowed to sound like a learner, because you *are* a learner, and there is nothing wrong with that. Every fluent speaker on earth was once exactly where you are now. They got fluent by speaking imperfectly, thousands of times, without waiting for permission. I am giving you that permission now, in writing, so you never have to wait for it again.

Feel that? That little loosening in your chest? That is the weight of perfectionism starting to lift. You do not have to carry it anymore. It never

helped you. It only slowed you down.



## **Now That Fear Is Out of the Way**

This is the end of Part One. We have spent these first chapters clearing the ground. We talked about speed before perfection. We talked about stopping translation. We talked about daily practice and measuring progress. And in this chapter, we faced the biggest blocker of all: the fear of mistakes and the trap of perfectionism.

Here is what I want you to understand. Mindset alone will not make you fluent. You cannot just believe your way to speaking English. But the right mindset removes the brakes. It clears the road. And now the road is clear.

In Part Two, we stop talking about fear and we start training. I will give you the actual exercises, including the Stopwatch Method that has worked for thousands of my students. You will learn how to practice every day, how to speak fast on purpose, how to stop your brain from translating, and how to measure your progress so you can see yourself improving week by week.

The fear is out of the way now. You have permission. You have a new standard, "good enough to be understood." You know that fluency comes first and accuracy comes later. You know that mistakes are data, not disasters. So take a breath, turn the page, and let's train.

### REMEMBER THIS

- The real fear is not about English. It is about being judged and looking stupid, and that fear is mostly imaginary.
- Confidence comes from action, not before it. Waiting until you are "ready" or "perfect" guarantees you will never speak.
- Fluency and accuracy are two different skills. Build fluency first, speaking fast and freely, and polish accuracy much later.
- Mistakes are data that show you what to improve, and proof that you are brave enough to try. Native speakers make mistakes too.
- People listen for meaning, not grammar. Your new standard is "good enough to be understood," not "perfect."
- Talk back to the inner critic. Name it, answer it, and ask "What if I am understood?" instead of "What if I make a mistake?"
- You have permission to speak badly. Done is better than perfect. Spoken beats perfect every time.

PART TWO

# The Speaking Workout

*The core training—a stopwatch, a sprint, and a few minutes a day—that turns frozen knowledge into flowing speech.*

## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Stopwatch Method

*The simplest, strangest, most powerful speaking exercise you will ever do.*

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**H**ere is the truth that took me years to discover, and that I have now watched prove itself with more than eight thousand students: you do not have a knowledge problem. You have a speed problem. You know more English than you think. The words are inside you. But when you open your mouth, something slows you down, traps you, and makes you feel like a beginner all over again. This chapter gives you the single exercise that fixes that, and you can start it tonight, alone, with nothing but your phone and sixty seconds.

The exercise is called the Stopwatch Method. The idea is almost too simple to believe. You talk out loud about one topic for a fixed time. You count how many words you said. You write the number down. The next time, you try to beat that number. That is the whole thing. No grammar drills, no flashcards, no waiting for a teacher. Just you, a timer, and a number you are trying to grow.

It sounds like a game, and in a way it is. But behind the game is a serious piece of brain science, and once you understand *why* it works, you will never again practice English the old, slow, painful way.

## Why speed beats perfection

Think about what happens in your head right now when you want to speak. You have a thought in your own language. You search for the English words. You arrange them in the right order. You check the grammar. You worry about your accent. And only then, finally, you say something — usually too late, and usually with an apology. This is called translation, and it is

the single biggest reason adults speak slowly. Every sentence has to take a long, slow trip through your first language before it comes out in English.

The translation habit feels safe because it feels careful. But it is a trap. As long as you give your brain time to translate, your brain will keep translating, and you will stay slow forever. You cannot fix this by trying harder to translate faster. You fix it by removing the time.

*“When you speak fast enough, your brain has no time to translate — so it stops trying, and starts speaking English directly.”*

That is the secret of the Stopwatch Method. By chasing speed — more words, more words, always more words — you take away the seconds your brain uses to translate. At first this feels uncomfortable, even chaotic. You will say messy things. You will make mistakes. Good. The mess is the sound of the old habit breaking. After a few weeks of pushing for speed, something quiet and wonderful happens: the words start coming straight out, without the trip through your first language. That is fluency. Not perfect grammar — automatic speech.

I have measured this with real learners again and again. When people start, they usually speak about forty to fifty words per minute, full of long pauses, "ah," and frozen silences. After about two months of regular practice with this one method, most are speaking over ninety words per minute. They did not learn thousands of new words in those two months. They simply learned to use the words they already had, fast, without stopping to translate.

## **The one golden rule**

Before I give you the exact steps, you must understand the rule that makes everything else work. It is more important than topics, timers, or counting. Here it is:

*“Do not stop talking. Keep the sound going, no matter what.”*

When you cannot find a word, do not freeze. Do not go silent. Do not switch to your own language. Instead, keep the English sound alive. Repeat the last word. Say "um," "well," "you know," "let me think," "what else," "so, so, so." Describe the problem itself: "I want to say something but I forget the word, it is a kind of... a thing you use for..." All of that is English. All of it counts. All of it keeps your mouth moving and your brain in English mode.

The moment you stop, your brain switches back to your first language and starts translating again. The whole exercise is built to stop that from happening. So your job is simple and a little bit crazy: for sixty seconds, the English sound never stops. Whatever it takes. A river of words is the goal, not a perfect sentence.

#### **TRY THIS NOW**

Put this book down. Take out your phone, open the voice recorder, and press record. Set a separate timer for 60 seconds. Now talk out loud about your day today — what you ate, where you went, how you felt — and do not stop until the timer rings. If you get stuck, say "um, and then, um" and keep going. When it rings, stop and breathe. You just did your first repetition. It does not need to be good. It only needs to be done. Save the recording; you will count the words in a moment.

## **The exact routine, step by step**

Now let us turn this into a clear routine you can repeat every single day. Read all the steps once, then do them. Keep it on your phone or near your bed so there is no excuse.

1. **Pick one topic.** Choose something you can talk about without thinking hard — your morning, your favorite food, your job, a movie you saw. One topic only. (A list of good topics is below.)

2. **Set a timer for 60 seconds.** Use your phone. Sixty seconds is the standard. It is long enough to matter and short enough that you cannot make excuses.
3. **Press record (optional but powerful).** Open your phone's voice recorder before you start the timer. Recording lets you count exactly and hear your progress. If recording makes you nervous at first, skip it and estimate — but come back to it soon.
4. **Speak out loud, non-stop, until the timer rings.** Out loud, not in your head. Follow the golden rule: never let the sound die. Mistakes are welcome. Speed is the only score.
5. **Count your words.** Either count from the recording, or estimate (the easy method is below). Get a number.
6. **Write the number in your log.** Date and word count. A notebook, a notes app, anything. The log is not optional — it is the engine of the whole method.
7. **Next time, beat your record.** Tomorrow, same topic or a new one, try to say even one more word than today. That single goal — beat the number — is what pulls your speed up week after week.

That is the entire method. Seven steps, about three minutes a day. Do not add complexity. Do not turn it into a grammar lesson. The power is in its simplicity and in doing it again, and again, and again.

## How to count your words without going crazy

You do not need a perfect count. You need a number you can compare to yesterday's number. Here are three easy ways, from fastest to most exact.

### The estimate method (fastest)

Right after you finish, ask yourself: did I speak in short bursts, normal sentences, or a steady flow? Use a rough scale. Very slow with many long pauses is around 40 words. A normal, comfortable pace is around 60 to 70.

A fast, almost non-stop flow is 90 or more. Write your best guess. As long as you guess the same way each time, the comparison is fair.

### **The count-ten-seconds method (quick and accurate)**

Play back your recording and carefully count the words in just the first ten seconds. Then multiply by six. If you said 12 words in ten seconds, that is about 72 words per minute. This is fast and surprisingly accurate, and you do not have to count the whole minute.

### **The full count method (most exact)**

Once a week, count every word in one recording. Yes, even the "ums" and repeated words — they count, because they keep you talking. This gives you a true number for your log and shows your real progress over time. Counting "um" feels strange, but remember: in this method, sound is success.

## **How to choose good topics**

The best topics are easy, personal, and familiar. You should not have to think about *what* to say so that all your energy goes into *how fast* you say it. Save the hard, intellectual subjects for later. Right now, choose topics where you already know the content by heart.

Here are topics that work well. Pick one each day:

1. What I did today, from morning to now.
2. My favorite food and how to make it.
3. My family and the people I live with.
4. A movie or show I watched recently.
5. My dream holiday or a trip I loved.
6. My job, or what I study, and a normal day of it.
7. My best friend and how we met.
8. What I want to do this weekend.

9. The room I am sitting in right now — describe everything.
10. A simple story: tell what happened the last time something went wrong.

Telling a story is especially good, because stories have a built-in order — first, then, after that, finally — and that order pulls more words out of you naturally. When you run dry, just keep telling what happened next.

### COMMON PROBLEMS

**"I freeze and go completely silent."** This is the most common problem, and the rule fixes it: do not chase the missing word — talk around it. Say "I forgot the word, but it is something like..." and describe it. Keep any English sound going. The freeze ends the moment you decide that silence is not allowed.

**"I run out of ideas before the minute ends."** Repeat yourself in new words, or zoom in on a detail. If you finished describing your breakfast, describe the cup, the table, how the coffee smelled. There is always more to say about something small. You can also simply start the topic again from the beginning.

**"I feel silly talking to myself."** Everyone does at first. Close the door, or talk while walking, or pretend you are leaving a voice message to a friend. After three or four days the strange feeling disappears, and what remains is a growing number you are proud of. Feeling silly for one minute a day is a very small price for fluency.

**"My grammar is full of mistakes."** On purpose, ignore them during the minute. Speed first, accuracy later. As your speed rises, your accuracy will quietly follow, because your brain finally has practice producing real English in real time.

**"My word count went down today."** Normal. Some days you are tired or the topic is harder. Look at the weekly trend, not one bad day. The line goes up over weeks, not in a straight line.

## How often, and for how long

Every day. That is the honest answer. This method works through repetition, and a single minute a day will beat a long, serious study session once a

week. The whole routine — pick, time, speak, count, log — takes about three minutes. You can do it before breakfast, in the shower, on a walk, or in bed before you sleep. There is no learner alive who cannot find three minutes.

If you want to do more, do three rounds in a row: three different topics, three numbers, all logged. But never let "more" become an excuse to do nothing. One round done beats five rounds planned. The students who succeeded were not the ones who practiced the longest. They were the ones who practiced the most often.

*“One minute every day will take you further than one hour every week. Frequency beats length, every time.”*

## **What progress really looks like**

Let me show you the journey so you know what to expect. The table below is a typical path — close to what I have seen from thousands of learners who do this method daily on 60-second rounds. Your exact numbers will differ, but the shape will be the same: slow and shaky at first, then a steady, satisfying climb.

## TYPICAL WORD-COUNT PROGRESS OVER EIGHT WEEKS OF DAILY 60-SECOND PRACTICE

Week	Words per minute	How it feels
Week 1	~45	Many pauses, lots of "um," translating in your head
Week 2	~52	Fewer freezes, you trust the golden rule more
Week 3	~58	Sentences start to flow; less searching for words
Week 4	~65	You notice you are not translating as much
Week 5	~72	Talking feels easier; the minute passes faster
Week 6	~80	Words arrive before you ask for them
Week 7	~86	Real flow; you surprise yourself
Week 8	90+	Automatic speech — you think in English while you talk

Read that bottom row again. Ninety-plus words per minute, in about two months, with three minutes a day. Not because you became a different person, but because you stopped translating and started speaking. The gap between week one and week eight is not new knowledge. It is the same you, finally allowed to go fast.

### Your plan for tonight

Do not finish this chapter and think "I will start tomorrow." Tomorrow is where good intentions go to die. Start tonight. Right now, before you sleep, do one round. Pick a topic from the list. Set sixty seconds. Press record.

Talk and do not stop. Count your words with the ten-second trick. Write today's date and your first number at the top of a fresh page or a new note titled "My Stopwatch Log."

That first number is your starting line. It might be 38. It might be 51. It does not matter what it is — it only matters that it exists, because everything from here is about beating it. Tomorrow you will try for one more word. The day after, one more. In eight weeks you will look back at that first humble number and barely recognize the slow, careful, translating learner who wrote it. You will have spoken your way into fluency, one fast minute at a time.

#### **REMEMBER THIS**

- You do not have a knowledge problem — you have a speed problem. The words are already inside you.
- Speed removes the time your brain uses to translate, so the translation habit fades and speech becomes automatic.
- The golden rule above all others: do not stop talking. Repeat words, say "um" in English, describe the missing word — just keep the sound going.
- The routine: pick one easy topic, set 60 seconds, speak non-stop, count your words, log the number, then beat it next time.
- Count fast: words in ten seconds times six, or just estimate. A comparable number matters more than a perfect one.
- Practice every day. One minute daily beats one hour weekly. Frequency wins.
- Expect about 40-50 words per minute at the start and over 90 after roughly two months of daily practice.
- Start tonight. Do one round, write your first number, and make it the record you will spend the next eight weeks breaking.

## CHAPTER SIX

# How to Think in English

*The goal isn't to translate faster. It's to stop translating at all.*

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**I**n Chapter Two you met the translation trap. You learned why building every sentence in your native language first, and then converting it word by word into English, makes you slow, nervous, and stuck. You understood the problem. Now it is time to fix it. This chapter is the toolkit. It is full of small, simple drills you can do anywhere, alone, for free, starting today.

Here is the most important thing to understand before we begin. The answer to the translation trap is not to translate faster. Many learners think the goal is to speed up the journey from their native word to the English word. It is not. The real goal is to remove the native word from the road completely. You want English to connect *directly* to the thing it means. Not to your other language. To the thing itself.

## What "thinking in English" really means

Let's make this concrete. Imagine an apple. When a child who grew up speaking English sees an apple, what happens in their head? They do not see the apple, then think of a word in another language, then translate it. They see the apple and the English word "apple" is simply *there*. The word is glued to the image, the smell, the crunch, the cold weight of it in your hand. Word and thing are one unit.

When you learned the word "apple," you probably learned it as a pair: the English word on one side, your native word on the other. So in your mind, "apple" is connected to your native word, and your native word is connected to the real apple. There is a middle step. Every time you speak, you walk through that middle step. That middle step is what slows you down.

Thinking in English means deleting the middle step. It means building a new, direct road: English word to real thing. Image, feeling, action, sound. No detour through your first language.

*“Don't try to translate faster. Build a new road that skips translation entirely.”*

This sounds like a big, mysterious skill. It is not. It is a habit, and habits are built by repetition. The drills below are simply ways to repeat the new road, again and again, until it becomes the road your brain naturally takes. You do not need a teacher, a textbook, an app, or even another person. You need your own eyes, your own day, and a few minutes at a time.

Let's start.

## The Drills

### 1. Drill 1: Name What You See

This is the simplest drill in the whole book, and the most powerful. As you move through your day, silently label the things around you in English. A chair: "chair." A window: "window." Your phone, the door, the sky, a dog, a bus, a cup. Just the word. Point your attention at the object and let the English word land on it, like a sticker.

Do not say the native word. Do not check if you "got it right." If a word does not come, skip it and move on. The point is not to be perfect. The point is to practice connecting the English word straight to the real object in front of your eyes, with nothing in between.

Start with nouns, because they are the easiest to see. Then add actions: a man walking ("walking"), a woman eating ("eating"), rain falling ("falling"). Then add descriptions: "tall building," "red car," "old man," "crowded street." You can do this while waiting for a bus, while walking,

while sitting in a cafe. Nobody knows you are doing it. It costs nothing and it works every single time.

## 2. **Drill 2: Narrate Your Own Actions (Inner Monologue)**

Now turn the camera on yourself. As you do ordinary things, describe what you are doing, in English, in your head or in a quiet voice. Make a cup of coffee and say: "I'm filling the kettle. I'm turning it on. The water is heating up. I'm taking a cup. The cup is white. I'm pouring the coffee. It's hot. It smells good."

Notice how natural and small these sentences are. That is the point. You are not writing an essay. You are giving your brain easy, real, present-moment sentences that connect words to what your hands and body are actually doing right now. Action plus word, action plus word.

Do this during boring, automatic tasks: washing dishes, getting dressed, walking to the store, cooking dinner. These moments are dead time anyway. Fill them with English. Because the action is real and happening in front of you, your brain links the words to the action directly, with no translation. Over weeks, this builds a quiet English voice inside your head that runs on its own.

## 3. **Drill 3: Describe the Room Out Loud**

Once a day, stop, look around the room you are in, and describe it out loud for one or two minutes. Speak. Use your real voice. "I'm in my kitchen. There is a table in the middle. On the table there are two cups and a newspaper. The window is open. Outside I can see a tree. The floor is wooden. There is a clock on the wall and it says eight o'clock."

This drill adds your mouth and your ears to the work. Naming silently is good, but speaking out loud trains your tongue to move and your ears to hear your own English. It also pushes you to make full sentences, not just single words, so you practice grammar in a relaxed, low-pressure way.

Do not stop to fix mistakes. If you say something wrong, keep going. Fluency comes from flow, and flow comes from not stopping. Speed before perfection, just like the rest of the method. Describe the room, the street, the people on the train, the food on your plate. Anything in front of you is material.

#### 4. **Drill 4: English-Only Windows**

Choose a short block of time and make it English-only. Inside this window, you try to think only in English. No native words allowed, even in your own head. Start tiny: five minutes. That is all. Set a timer if it helps.

During your window, combine the other drills. Name what you see, narrate what you do, describe where you are. When a native word sneaks in, gently notice it and switch back to English. It will sneak in a lot at first. That is completely normal. You are not failing. You are training. Every time you catch a native word and replace it, you are making the English road a little wider.

As it gets easier, grow the window. Five minutes becomes ten. Ten becomes thirty. Pick a regular time so it becomes a habit: your morning walk, your lunch break, the last ten minutes before sleep. The goal over months is to make these English windows longer and more frequent, until thinking in English feels less like a drill and more like a place you can visit whenever you want.

#### 5. **Drill 5: Explain, Don't Translate (Use an English-English Dictionary)**

When you meet a new word, your old habit is to look up the translation in your native language. Break that habit. Instead, use an English-English dictionary, the kind that explains a word using other English words. Better still, before you look it up, try to explain the word yourself, in English.

What is a "spoon"? "A small tool you use to eat soup or stir your tea." What does "tired" mean? "When you need to rest, when your body wants to sleep." What is "honest"? "When you always tell the truth." Notice that you never needed your native language to understand these. You explained English with English. This is exactly how a fluent speaker's mind works, and it keeps you inside English instead of jumping out of it.

This skill has a huge bonus. When you are speaking and you forget a word, you will be able to explain your way around it. If you forget "umbrella," you can say "the thing you hold over your head in the rain," and the conversation keeps moving. Learners who only translate freeze when a word is missing. Learners who explain never get stuck.

## 6. **Drill 6: Build Word-to-Image Links, Not Word-to-Word Links**

When you learn or review a word, attach it to a picture, a feeling, or an action instead of to your native word. Do not learn "beach equals [native word]." Instead, close your eyes and see the sand, hear the waves, feel the sun, and let the word "beach" sit on top of that scene.

For verbs, act them out, even just a tiny movement. Say "jump" and feel your knees bend. Say "whisper" and lower your voice. Say "grab" and close your hand. For feelings, remember a real moment. "Nervous" is the feeling in your stomach before a test. "Relieved" is the breath you let out when bad news turns out to be good. Tie the word to the real experience.

When you review your vocabulary, use pictures instead of native-language translations whenever you can. Flashcards with images on one side. Photos on your phone. A drawing, even a bad one. Every image link you build is one more word that comes to you directly, fast, with no detour. This is how you slowly replace your whole word-to-word library with a word-to-image library.

### TRY THIS NOW

Stop reading for sixty seconds. Look up from this book. Pick five things you can see right now and name each one out loud in English: "lamp," "table," "window," "cup," "door." Then describe one of them in a full sentence: "The cup is on the table and it is empty." That is it. You just thought in English on purpose. You can do this anywhere, any time, for the rest of your life, and it is the single fastest way to build the new road.

## It Will Feel Hard and Slow. That's Normal.

Let me be honest with you, because you deserve honesty. The first days of these drills feel strange and slow. Your English window will fill up with native words. You will reach for "apple" and find nothing. You will describe a room and run out of words after three sentences. You might feel like a small child again, pointing at things and naming them.

Good. That feeling means it is working. You are building something new, and new things are clumsy before they are smooth. Think about the first time you tied your shoes, or rode a bike, or drove a car. Slow, awkward, full of mistakes. And now you do those things without thinking. Your brain made them automatic through repetition. English will become automatic the same way.

The mistake is to expect the new road to feel easy on day one. It will not. The old road, through your native language, is wide and worn smooth from years of use. The new road is a narrow path through tall grass. Every time you walk it, you press the grass down a little more. Walk it enough times and it becomes the wider, easier road. The drills in this chapter are simply you, walking that path, over and over, until it is the path your brain prefers.

*“The new road feels narrow because it is new. Every drill widens it.”*

## Start Small, Then Grow

Do not try to do all six drills at once for an hour a day. You will get tired and quit, and quitting is the only real way to fail at this. Instead, start absurdly small. Pick one drill. Do it for two or three minutes. Tomorrow, do it again. That is the whole plan for week one.

A simple way to begin: spend the first week just naming what you see (Drill 1) for a few minutes here and there. In week two, add narrating your actions (Drill 2) while you make breakfast. In week three, describe a room out loud once a day (Drill 3). Keep stacking gently. Switch your dictionary to English-English whenever you look up a word (Drill 5), starting today, because that one costs you no extra time at all.

Consistency beats intensity. Five minutes every day will take you much further than two hours once a week. The point of these drills is that they fit into the gaps of your normal life. Waiting in line, walking, cooking, washing up, riding the bus, lying in bed before sleep. You are not adding a heavy new task to your day. You are filling time that was already empty.

## **How the Stopwatch Connects to This**

Remember the Stopwatch Method from Chapter Five. You set a timer and you speak, without stopping, faster than your careful mind can keep up. There is a reason that method works so well, and it connects directly to everything in this chapter.

When you speak under time pressure, you simply do not have enough seconds to translate. The slow road through your native language takes too long. The stopwatch forces your brain to grab whatever English is closest and use it now. In other words, the stopwatch pushes you onto the direct road whether you are ready or not, because the translation road is too slow to finish in time.

So the drills in this chapter and the Stopwatch work as a team. The drills build the direct road quietly, all day long, in small calm moments. The Stopwatch forces you onto that road and trains you to run on it at full

speed. Do the drills to build the path. Use the Stopwatch to learn to sprint down it. Together, they turn thinking in English from a wish into a habit.

You now have everything you need. You understand the goal: connect English straight to images, feelings, and actions, with no native word in the middle. You have six simple drills you can start today, for free, anywhere. You know it will feel slow at first, and you know that slow feeling is the sound of a new road being built. Start small. Be patient with yourself. Walk the path every day. The road will widen, and one day soon you will notice, with a small shock of joy, that you just thought a whole thought in English and never once stopped to translate.

### **REMEMBER THIS**

- The goal is not to translate faster. It is to delete the middle step and connect English directly to images, feelings, and actions.
- Name what you see all day, silently or out loud. It is the simplest, most powerful drill, and it is free.
- Narrate your own actions in English while you do ordinary tasks. Fill dead time with an English inner voice.
- Describe a room out loud once a day to train your mouth and ears, and never stop to fix mistakes.
- Create short English-only windows and grow them over time, from five minutes to thirty and beyond.
- Explain words with other English words instead of translating them. This also rescues you when you forget a word mid-sentence.
- Link words to pictures, feelings, and actions, not to native-language words.
- It feels hard and slow at first because the road is new. That is normal. Every drill widens the path.
- Start small and stay consistent. Five minutes every day beats two hours once a week.
- The Stopwatch forces you onto the direct road because translation is simply too slow to finish in time. The drills and the Stopwatch work as a team.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# The One-Minute Sprint

*You don't need an hour a day. You need sixty honest seconds—done every single day.*

---

**L**et me guess how your English practice usually goes. You wake up one Sunday full of energy. You decide that today is the day. You sit down, open your notebook, watch a video, repeat some sentences, and practice for two whole hours. You feel proud. You feel like a serious learner. And then... Monday comes. Work is busy. Tuesday, you are tired. Wednesday, you forget. By the next weekend, you have done nothing for six days, and you tell yourself you will "catch up" with another big session. But that big session never quite happens.

If this sounds familiar, please hear me clearly: the problem is not you. The problem is the plan. A plan built on rare, heroic effort almost always breaks. What you need instead is a plan so small that it cannot break—a habit so tiny that even your worst, busiest, most exhausted day still has room for it. That is what this chapter gives you. It is called the One-Minute Sprint, and it might be the most important sixty seconds of your learning day.

## Why a Minute a Day Beats Two Hours a Week

Speaking is not knowledge. It is a skill. And skills do not grow from information—they grow from repetition. Think about anything physical you have learned: riding a bicycle, swimming, driving a car. You did not become good by reading about it once for two hours. You became good by doing it, a little at a time, again and again, until your body stopped thinking and simply did it. Speaking English is exactly the same. Your mouth, your breath, your rhythm, and your brain all need reps—frequent, regular reps.

Here is the part most learners miss. The brain decides what is important by watching what you do *often*, not what you do *intensely*. If you speak English for two hours once a week, your brain thinks, "This is a rare event. I do not need to keep this ready." But if you speak English for one minute every single day, your brain thinks, "We use this all the time. Keep it close. Keep it sharp." Daily use sends a signal: this matters, do not forget it.

And forgetting is the real enemy. After a single long session, you start forgetting almost immediately. By the time your next weekly session arrives, much of what you built has faded, and you spend half your time just climbing back to where you were. But a short daily touch refreshes the memory before it can fade. You are not starting over every week. You are standing on yesterday, every day. Small and frequent always beats big and rare—not because it feels better, but because it actually sticks.

*“Consistency beats intensity. A minute a day, every day, will take you further than a marathon you do once and abandon.”*

This is the lighter, everyday companion to the Stopwatch Method you learned in Chapter Five. The Stopwatch Method is your full workout—your deep, focused training. The One-Minute Sprint is your daily walk. You do not do a full workout every day; nobody can. But you can walk every day. And the walk is what keeps you in the game between the workouts.

## **What Exactly Is a Sprint?**

A One-Minute Sprint is simple: you pick a topic, and you talk out loud about it for sixty seconds without stopping. That is the whole thing. No script. No preparation. No waiting until your grammar is "ready." You just speak.

The one rule that makes it work is this: **do not stop**. For sixty seconds, your mouth keeps moving. If you forget a word, you talk around it. If you

make a mistake, you keep going. If you run out of ideas, you repeat yourself, or you say "um, what else, oh yes..." and push on. The goal is not a perfect speech. The goal is sixty seconds of unbroken speaking. Remember the core promise of this whole method: speed before perfection. The sprint is where you practice that promise every day.

## The Sprint Routine

Here is exactly how to run one sprint, step by step. Read it once, and then you will be able to do it forever.

1. **Pick a prompt.** Choose one topic—anything. "My morning," "the food I ate today," "what I want this weekend." Do not spend more than three seconds choosing. The topic does not matter; the talking does.
2. **Set sixty seconds.** Use your phone timer, a stopwatch, or just a clock. Knowing the clock is running pushes you to keep moving.
3. **Start talking out loud.** Speak in real sound, not in your head. Your tongue and lips need the exercise, not just your imagination. Quiet whispering is fine if you are in public—but make sound.
4. **Do not stop until the time ends.** No long pauses, no restarting, no "let me say that better." Push through every gap. Talking around a missing word is a skill, and this is how you build it.
5. **Notice one thing.** When the minute ends, ask yourself: did that feel a little easier than yesterday? Did I pause less? You can count your words if you enjoy numbers—just guess roughly how many you spoke—or you can simply notice the feeling. Either way, you finish by recognizing progress.

That is it. Five steps, sixty seconds. You can do your first one the moment you finish reading this paragraph.

### TRY THIS NOW

Stop reading. Take out your phone and set a timer for sixty seconds. Your prompt is: *"What did I do today, from the moment I woke up?"* Press start and talk out loud—do not stop until the timer beeps. Mistakes are welcome. Pauses are not. When you finish, notice how it felt. That was your first sprint. You are now a person who practices speaking every day—you just have to keep going.

## Stacking Sprints: From One Minute to Five

One sprint a day is enough to keep the habit alive—and on hard days, it is all you should ask of yourself. But on normal days, you can do more without much more effort. The trick is to *stack* sprints: do two or three in a row, with a short breath between them, to make a 3–5 minute session.

Stacking works beautifully because each sprint is still just one minute. Your brain never feels the weight of a long task. You are not telling yourself, "I must speak for five minutes," which sounds heavy. You are telling yourself, "Just one more minute," which sounds easy—and you can always do one more minute. Three small wins feel lighter than one big chore, even when the total time is the same.

A good stacked session looks like this: Sprint one on an easy, comfortable topic to warm up your mouth. Sprint two on something a little harder, like an opinion or a story. Sprint three as a free choice, or a repeat of sprint one to feel how much smoother it has become. Breathe for ten seconds between each. That is a complete, satisfying speaking workout in under five minutes—and you can do it before your coffee is even finished.

## Attach the Habit to Something You Already Do

Here is the secret that separates people who keep a habit from people who lose it. Do not try to "remember" to practice. Memory is unreliable, especially on busy days. Instead, **attach** your sprint to something you already

do automatically—an action that happens every day without fail. The old action becomes the alarm clock for the new one.

This is sometimes called habit stacking, and the formula is easy: "After I [do my existing habit], I will do one sprint." For example:

- **After I pour my morning coffee**, I will do one sprint while it cools.
- **When I sit down on the bus or train**, I will do one sprint (a quiet whisper is fine).
- **After I brush my teeth at night**, I will do one sprint before bed.
- **After I close my laptop at the end of work**, I will do one sprint before I stand up.

Pick *one* anchor to start. Just one. The coffee, the commute, or the bedtime—whichever happens most reliably in your day. Tie your sprint to it, and let that everyday action remind you. After a week or two, you will not have to decide to practice. The coffee will remind you. The habit will run on its own.

*“You will not rise to the level of your motivation. You will fall to the level of your habits—so build one so small it cannot fall.”*

## **A Simple Weekly Plan**

Some days you will not want to think about a topic. So here is a ready-made week. Each day gives you a prompt and a target. The targets get a little bigger as the week goes on, but every day starts with the same promise: one minute is enough. Do not over-plan. Just look at today's row and speak.

Day	Prompt	Target
Monday	My morning routine, step by step	1 sprint (60 sec)
Tuesday	A food I love and how to make it	1 sprint (60 sec)
Wednesday	A problem at work or school today	2 sprints (stacked)
Thursday	Something I want to buy and why	2 sprints (stacked)
Friday	My opinion: is technology good or bad?	3 sprints (stacked)
Saturday	Describe my favorite place out loud	3 sprints (stacked)
Sunday	What I learned this week / free choice	1 sprint (rest day)

Notice that Sunday is light on purpose. A rest day is still a day you showed up. The goal is an unbroken chain—a small mark on the calendar for every single day. Keep that chain alive, and the speaking will take care of itself.

### If You Hate Choosing Topics

Keep a tiny list of ten prompts in your phone—questions like "What made me smile today?" or "Describe the last meal I ate." When it is sprint time, glance at the list, pick one, and go. The less you think, the faster you speak, and the faster you speak, the easier the whole thing stays.

### How to Keep Going on Bad Days

There will be bad days. Days when you are sick, sad, exhausted, or buried in work. On those days, your mind will whisper, "Skip it today. You will do double tomorrow." Do not listen. That whisper is how every streak dies. The danger of a bad day is not the one minute you miss—it is that one missed day quietly becomes two, then a week, then a quiet goodbye to the whole habit.

So here is your rule for the worst days: **a sixty-second version is always possible.** You may not have the energy for three sprints, or even for

a "good" sprint. That is fine. Lower the bar until you cannot trip over it. Talk for sixty seconds about how tired you are. Talk for sixty seconds in bed with your eyes closed. Whisper one sprint while you wait for the kettle. It does not have to be impressive. It only has to happen.

Why does this matter so much? Because on bad days, you are not really practicing English—you are practicing being someone who never breaks the chain. You are protecting your identity as a daily speaker. The English you build that day is small, but the habit you protect is enormous. A weak sprint keeps you in the game. A skipped sprint starts the slide out of it. Always choose the weak sprint.

#### **TRY THIS NOW**

Decide your bad-day plan right now, before you need it. Finish this sentence out loud: "On my worst, busiest day, I will still do one sprint while I \_\_\_\_\_." (Brush my teeth? Wait for coffee? Lie in bed?) Say it twice. Now you have a promise ready for the hard days—and the hard days are exactly when this promise saves you.

## **Small Is Not Weak. Small Is Sustainable.**

I know the worry. A part of you is thinking, "One minute? That cannot possibly be enough. Real progress needs real hours." I understand that feeling—but it is the very belief that has kept you stuck. The learner who demands two perfect hours usually does zero, because two hours is hard to find and easy to skip. The learner who asks for one honest minute does it every day—and a year later, has spoken English on three hundred and sixty-five separate days.

Think about that. Three hundred and sixty-five days of speaking out loud. Three hundred and sixty-five days of pushing through pauses, of talking around missing words, of feeling your mouth grow smoother. No weekend warrior comes close to that. The minute is not the goal—the minute is the doorway. Most days, once you start your sixty seconds, you will happily keep going for two or three more, because starting was the only hard part.

But on the days you only do the one minute, you still win, because you kept the chain alive.

Small is not a compromise. Small is the strategy. A tiny habit is the only kind that survives a real life full of work, family, tiredness, and surprise. You are not lowering your ambition by starting small—you are protecting it. The river carves the canyon not with one great flood, but with the same quiet water passing every single day. Be the water. Show up for your minute. And let time do what time does for people who never stop.

Your assignment is simple, and you can start the moment you close this book. Pick your anchor—coffee, commute, or bedtime. Tomorrow, after that anchor, do one sprint. Then do it the next day, and the next. Do not aim for perfect. Aim for unbroken. You are sixty seconds away from becoming someone who speaks English every day.

#### **REMEMBER THIS**

- Speaking is a skill, and skills grow from frequent reps—so a minute a day beats two hours once a week.
- Daily use fights forgetting; you stand on yesterday instead of starting over every week.
- A sprint is sixty seconds of nonstop talking on any topic. The one rule: do not stop.
- Stack two or three sprints for a 3–5 minute session—"just one more minute" is always easy.
- Attach your sprint to something you already do: "After my coffee / commute / brushing my teeth, I do one sprint."
- On bad days, a sixty-second version is always possible. A weak sprint keeps the chain alive; a skipped one starts the slide.
- Small is not weak—small is sustainable. Aim for unbroken, not perfect.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# Talk to Yourself (Out Loud)

*The secret of fluent speakers: they practice speaking long before anyone is listening.*

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**L**et me ask you a strange question. How many hours did you spend speaking English last week? Not reading it. Not listening to it. Not studying grammar rules. Just moving your mouth and making English sounds come out. For most learners, the honest answer is "almost none." And then they wonder why speaking feels so hard.

Here is the truth that changes everything: you do not need another person to practice speaking. You have a mouth, a tongue, and a brain. That is all the equipment a speaker needs. The biggest reason learners stay stuck is not lack of words or lack of grammar. It is lack of mouth-time. You have collected the words. You have studied the rules. But your mouth has barely used them. This chapter fixes that, and it fixes it today, alone, with no partner and no money.

In the last three chapters you learned to push for speed (the Stopwatch Method), to think in English, and to run daily sprints. Now you will learn how to feed those engines with hours of real speaking practice that you control completely. The tool is simple and it is free: you are going to talk to yourself, out loud, every single day.

## The Athlete Who Trains Alone

I know what you are thinking. "Talking to myself? People will think I am crazy." So before we go further, I want to change how you see this. You are not "talking to yourself." You are training. There is a difference, and the difference is everything.

Think about a basketball player. Before any big game, that player has thrown thousands of shots at an empty basket. No crowd. No other team.

No score. Just the player, the ball, and the hoop, repeating the same motion until it becomes automatic. A singer practices alone in a room before standing on a stage. A pilot trains in a simulator before flying real passengers. Nobody calls them crazy. We call them serious.

Speaking English is a physical skill, just like shooting a ball or playing the piano. Your tongue, lips, and breath have to learn new movements. The only way muscles learn is through repetition. When you speak to yourself, you are doing exactly what the athlete does at the empty basket. You are taking your shots where it does not matter, so that later, when it does matter, the movement is already inside you.

*“You are not talking to yourself. You are an athlete taking practice shots at an empty basket.”*

Here is my promise to you, and I have watched it come true with thousands of students. The first day, talking out loud alone will feel strange. Maybe even the second day. By the third or fourth day, it will feel normal. By the end of two weeks, you will catch yourself doing it without thinking, while you cook, while you walk, while you wait for a bus. The strangeness disappears fast. The skill stays forever. Now let me give you the six techniques.

## **Six Ways to Practice Speaking Alone**

### **1. 1. Self-Narration: Describe What You Are Doing**

This is the easiest technique to start with, because you never run out of things to say. You simply narrate your own life out loud, in English, as it happens. Right now you might say: "I am sitting on my chair. I am holding a book. I am going to read the next page." When you make coffee in the morning: "I am filling the kettle. I am waiting for the water to boil. Now I am pouring it into my cup. It smells good."

Why does this work so well? Because it forces you to find words for ordinary life, which is exactly the life you will talk about with real people. It also keeps the speaking engine running constantly, with zero preparation. You do not need a topic, a partner, or a plan. The moment your mouth hits a word you do not know, you have found a gap to fill later. Notice that gap, keep going in English where you can, and look the word up afterward. Self-narration turns dead time, washing dishes, walking, getting dressed, into speaking practice.

## 2. 2. Shadowing: Speak Along With Audio

Shadowing is the most powerful technique in this chapter for fixing your pronunciation and rhythm. The idea is simple: you play a short clip of a native speaker, and you speak along with them, copying their sound, speed, and music as closely as you can, like a shadow following a body.

Here is how to do it, step by step:

**Step 1.** Choose a short clip, twenty to forty seconds long. A piece of a podcast, a YouTube video, a movie scene, or an audiobook. Pick something where the speaker talks clearly and you can find the words written down (subtitles or a transcript help a lot at the start).

**Step 2.** Listen to the whole clip two or three times. Just listen. Notice where the speaker pauses, which words they stress, and how their voice goes up and down.

**Step 3.** Play it again and this time speak at the same time as the audio. Do not wait for the speaker to finish. Talk while they talk, staying about one second behind, like an echo. It will feel messy and you will lose the words. That is completely normal. Keep going.

**Step 4.** Repeat the same clip five, eight, ten times. Each round you will catch a little more. Do not worry about understanding every word. Worry about matching the sound and the rhythm. Copy their music, not just their words.

**Step 5.** When you can shadow the clip smoothly, try saying it once without the audio, from memory, copying that same rhythm.

Shadowing trains your ear and your mouth at the same time. It teaches you how English really flows, with its stressed and weak words, which is the part textbooks never give you. Just a few minutes a day will start to change the way you sound.

### **3. 3. Record Yourself, Then Listen Back**

This one feels uncomfortable at first, and that discomfort is exactly why it works. Take out your phone, open the voice recorder, and record yourself speaking English for one or two minutes about any topic: your day, your opinion on something, a story. Then play it back and listen.

The first time, you will probably hate your own voice. Everyone does. Push through that. As you listen, you are not judging yourself, you are coaching yourself. Listen for one or two things only, not everything at once. Maybe: "Where do I pause too long?" or "Which sound do I keep getting wrong?" or "Do I say 'um' too much?" Pick one thing to improve, record again, and try to fix just that.

Here is the second, hidden gift of recording: it is a progress tracker. Save your recordings. Make one short recording on the same day each week, maybe every Sunday, on the same kind of topic. Do not delete them. After four weeks, listen to your very first recording, then your newest one. The difference will shock you. You cannot feel progress day to day, because it is too slow to notice. But your recordings remember what you sounded like a month ago, and they will prove to you that you are getting better. On the hard days, when you feel like you are going nowhere, those old recordings are your proof that you are.

### **4. 4. Talk to the Mirror**

Stand in front of a mirror and talk to the person you see. Explain your day to them. Tell them what you did, what you are planning, how you feel about it. The mirror adds something the other techniques do not:

eye contact and body language. You see your own face and mouth as you speak, which builds confidence and helps your pronunciation.

More importantly, the mirror is a rehearsal for real conversation. Looking at a face while you speak, even your own, trains the part of you that gets nervous when a real person is in front of you. Practice the things you actually need: introducing yourself, answering "How are you?", telling a short story about your weekend. When the real moment comes, your mouth and your eyes will have done it before. Two minutes a day at the mirror removes a surprising amount of fear.

## 5. **5. Re-Tell What You Watched or Read**

After you watch a video, finish an episode of a show, or read an article, close it and re-tell it out loud in your own words, as if you were explaining it to a friend. "So I just watched a video about how bees make honey. First the bee flies to a flower, and then..." Take one or two minutes. Use your own simple words, not the exact words from the video.

This technique is special because it bridges input and output. Most of what you put into your brain, the listening and reading, never comes back out of your mouth. Re-telling forces it to come out. It also trains the exact skill you use in real life: summarizing, explaining, and sharing. And because the ideas are already in your head, your mouth can focus on building the English instead of inventing the content. When you cannot find a word, that gap is your next thing to learn. Re-telling turns everything you watch and read into double practice.

## 6. **6. Have Imaginary Conversations**

Real conversations are not just speaking, they are speaking back and forth. So practice both sides yourself. Imagine someone is asking you questions and answer them out loud. Picture a job interview: "Tell me about yourself." And you answer, out loud, fully. "What are your strengths?" Answer. Picture a new friend asking, "So what do you do for fun?" Answer. Picture a shop, a doctor, a taxi, an airport. Imagine the

questions you will really get, and rehearse your answers before you ever need them.

You can play both roles, asking the question and giving the answer, so you practice listening and responding, the rhythm of real talk. The huge advantage here is that you can prepare for specific situations that matter to you. If you have an interview next week, rehearse it ten times alone first. If you are traveling, rehearse ordering food, asking for directions, checking into a hotel. By the time the real conversation arrives, it will not be the first time your mouth has spoken those words. It will feel like something you have already done.

### **TRY THIS NOW**

Put this book down and do this immediately, before you forget. Stand up and walk to another room. As you walk, narrate everything out loud in English: "I am standing up. I am walking to the kitchen. I am opening the door. I see a window. The sky is grey today." Keep talking for sixty seconds without stopping, even if you make mistakes, even if you have to use simple words. Do not stop to fix anything. When a word is missing, say "something" and keep going. That is it. You just spoke English out loud, alone, on purpose. The strange feeling you have right now? It will be gone by Thursday.

## **How to Make It a Daily Habit**

Techniques only work if you actually use them, so let me make this easy to keep up. You do not need a special hour or a quiet study room. The whole point of solo speaking is that it fits inside the life you already have. Attach it to things you already do every day.

When you are getting dressed, narrate it. When you are walking somewhere, have an imaginary conversation. When you are cooking, describe each step. When you finish a video, re-tell it before you open the next one. Choose one shadowing clip for the week and do it every morning while your coffee cools. Record yourself once a week and never delete it. None of this

needs extra time in your day. It needs only that you switch the language in your head from silent to spoken, and from your first language to English.

A simple goal to aim for: fifteen minutes of out-loud English a day, spread across small moments. That is more speaking practice than most learners get in a whole month. Do it for thirty days and you will not be the same speaker.

*“Fifteen minutes of talking to yourself each day is more mouth-time than most learners get in a month.”*

One last warning, and it is an important one. When you talk to yourself, do not stop to correct every mistake. The goal is flow and mouth-time, not perfection, just like the Stopwatch Method taught you. Speed before perfection, always. If you stop every five seconds to fix a word, you train your mouth to stop. You want to train it to keep going. Make the mistake, notice it, and roll on. You can look up the missing word later. Right now, the job of your mouth is to move.

No one is grading you. No one is even listening. That freedom is the gift. The empty room is the safest place in the world to be bad at English, and being bad at it, again and again, in private, is exactly how you become good at it in public. Start talking to yourself today, and you will not have to talk to yourself for long. Soon, you will have plenty to say to everyone else.

### **REMEMBER THIS**

- You do not need a partner to practice speaking. You need mouth-time, and you can get it alone, for free, starting today.
- You are not "talking to yourself." You are training like an athlete taking practice shots where it does not matter, so it works when it does.
- The six techniques: narrate what you do, shadow audio, record and listen back, talk to the mirror, re-tell what you watched or read, and have imaginary conversations.
- Shadowing copies a speaker's rhythm and sound and is the fastest way to fix pronunciation. Re-telling turns everything you watch and read into speaking practice.
- Record yourself once a week and never delete it. Old recordings prove your progress on the days you feel stuck.
- Do not stop to fix every mistake. Keep flowing. Speed before perfection, always.
- It feels strange for a day or two, then it becomes completely normal. Attach it to daily habits and aim for fifteen minutes a day.

## CHAPTER NINE

# Beat Your Own Record

*Turn your practice into a game where you are the only opponent—and you keep winning.*

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**I**magine going to the gym every single day for three months, lifting weights, sweating, working hard—but never once stepping on a scale, never measuring your arm, never noticing your shirt fitting differently. After a few weeks, you would probably quit. Not because you stopped improving, but because you could not *see* yourself improving. This is exactly what happens to most English learners. They practice. They study. They work hard. And then they give up, convinced they are "not making progress"—when the truth is they were improving the whole time. They just had no way to see it.

This chapter is about fixing that. It closes Part II of this book with the most powerful motivation tool you have: a number. One simple number that climbs over time and proves, beyond any doubt, that you are getting faster, smoother, and more fluent. In the earlier chapters you learned the Stopwatch Method—speak for sixty seconds, count your words, push for speed before perfection. Now you are going to take that number and turn your whole practice into a game. A game you play against one person only: the version of you from last week.

## Why Invisible Progress Kills Motivation

Here is the cruel trick your brain plays on you. Progress in speaking is real, but it is slow and quiet. You do not wake up one morning suddenly fluent. Instead, every day you get a tiny bit faster at finding words, a tiny bit smoother at linking sentences, a tiny bit braver about opening your mouth. These improvements are so small from day to day that you literally cannot feel them. And because you cannot feel them, your brain decides they are not happening.

This is why so many people who are actually improving feel stuck. The improvement is invisible to them. And invisible progress feels like no progress at all. When something feels pointless, you stop doing it. That is not weakness—that is just how human motivation works. We are wired to repeat actions that show us a reward and abandon actions that seem to lead nowhere.

*“You are not failing. You are improving in a way you cannot feel—so we are going to make it something you can measure.”*

The solution is simple and almost magical: make the progress visible. The moment you start writing down a number after each practice session, everything changes. Suddenly you can see the line going up. You can see that last month you spoke 45 words in a minute and today you spoke 70. That is not a feeling—that is proof. And proof is fuel. It keeps you coming back to the practice that is actually working.

## The Power of One Number

You do not need a complicated system. You do not need an app with charts and badges (though you can use one if you like). You need one number you can beat. In this method, that number is usually your **words per minute**: how many English words you can speak in sixty seconds on a topic, without stopping.

Why words per minute? Because speed is honest. When you can speak faster, it means your brain is finding words more quickly, building sentences more automatically, and spending less time frozen and searching. You cannot fake fluency speed. A higher number genuinely means a more fluent you. And unlike grammar scores or vague feelings, it is easy to measure alone, with nothing but your phone's timer and your own voice.

Remember the core promise of this whole book: speed before perfection. Your word count does not measure how *correct* your English is. It measures how *freely* it flows. Those are two different skills, and fluency—the freedom—is the one that lets you actually have a conversation. Perfection can come later. First, you learn to keep the words moving.

## How to Keep a Simple Speaking Log

Your speaking log is the heart of this game. It can be a notebook, a note on your phone, or a spreadsheet—whatever you will actually open. Keep it ridiculously simple, because a system you abandon helps nobody. Here is exactly how to run it.

1. **Pick a topic.** Choose something you can talk about for one minute—your day, your favorite food, your job, a movie you saw. Write it down.
2. **Set a timer for 60 seconds.** Use your phone. Get ready to speak out loud, alone, with no notes.
3. **Speak until the timer ends.** Talk about your topic without stopping. Do not worry about mistakes. If you get stuck, say anything—keep the sound going.
4. **Count your words.** The easiest way is to record yourself and count afterward, or simply estimate by counting the words in a typical line and multiplying. Write the number down.
5. **Log the date, the topic, and the word count.** Three pieces of information. That is all.
6. **Mark your personal best.** Keep one line at the top of your log that says "Personal Best: \_\_\_\_." Every time you beat it, cross it out and write the new number. This is the line you are chasing.

That is the entire system. Thirty seconds of writing after each one-minute practice. Below is what a real log looks like after a few weeks. Notice that the number does not go up perfectly every day—some days are slower, and that is completely normal. What matters is the direction over time.

## A SAMPLE SPEAKING LOG—WATCH THE NUMBER CLIMB OVER SIX WEEKS

Date	Topic	Words in 60 sec	Personal best?
Week 1, Mon	My morning routine	45	★ New best
Week 1, Thu	My favorite food	43	—
Week 2, Mon	My weekend	52	★ New best
Week 2, Fri	My job	50	—
Week 3, Wed	A movie I liked	60	★ New best
Week 4, Mon	My hometown	58	—
Week 4, Sat	My plans for the year	68	★ New best
Week 5, Tue	Why I am learning English	78	★ New best
Week 6, Thu	My ideal vacation	92	★ New best

Look at that journey: 45 words climbing to 92 in six weeks. That is more than double. In the moment, this learner felt no difference from one day to the next—but the log tells the real story. By Week 6 they were speaking twice as freely as on Day 1. Without the log, they might have quit at Week 2, convinced nothing was happening. With it, every star was a small celebration that pulled them forward.

### TRY THIS NOW

Stop reading for three minutes. Open the timer on your phone and set it for 60 seconds. Pick the easiest topic you can think of—what you ate today. Speak about it out loud until the timer ends, no stopping. Then guess how many words you said and write it down somewhere with today's date. Congratulations: that number is now your personal best, and the only job from here is to beat it. You just started the game.

## The Solo Translation Speed Challenge

The words-per-minute game is your daily warmup. But to push your brain harder, you need a second game—one that tests how fast you can pull English out under pressure. In the original method, students do this in pairs using a chess clock: one person reads a sentence in their own language, the other races to say it in English, and the clock ticks down. You are practicing alone, so here is how to run the same challenge by yourself.

1. **Prepare a list of sentences in your own language.** Write 20 to 30 simple sentences—everyday things like "I am going to the store," "She has two brothers," "We watched a film last night." Keep them at your level.
2. **Set a timer for one minute.** Sit with your list in front of you.
3. **Race the clock.** Read each sentence silently in your language, then say it out loud in English as fast as you can. Move straight to the next one. Do not stop to fix mistakes—speed is the point.
4. **Count how many sentences you finished in the minute.** That is your score.
5. **Write it in your log and try to beat it next time.** Same sentences, faster. Then swap in new sentences and start a fresh record.

This challenge trains the exact skill you need in real conversation: converting a thought into spoken English instantly, without a long pause while your brain searches. The more you do it, the shorter that pause becomes, until one day it disappears and the English just comes out.

How fast should you aim? The table below shows target speeds by level, measured in sentences per minute. These are the same CEFR targets used in the original method. Find your level and make that your goal—then keep beating it.

## TRANSLATION SPEED TARGETS BY CEFR LEVEL (SHORT SENTENCES PER MINUTE)

Level	What it means	Target: sentences per minute
A1	Beginner	25
A2	Elementary	21
B1	Intermediate	18
B2	Upper-intermediate	16
C1	Advanced	15

Notice something surprising: the targets *drop* as the level rises. A beginner aims for 25 sentences a minute, but an advanced speaker only 15. Why? Because higher-level sentences are longer and more complex. A1 sentences are tiny ("I am tired"), so you should fire them off quickly. C1 sentences carry more—more clauses, more nuance—so fewer fit in a minute even when you are fluent. Use the target for *your* level, and as your sentences grow more sophisticated, do not panic if your raw count goes down. That can actually be a sign you are leveling up.

## Compete With Your Past Self—Never With Others

This is the most important rule of the whole game, so read it twice: **your only opponent is the you of yesterday**. Not your coworker who speaks beautifully. Not the polyglot on the internet. Not your younger cousin who picked up English from video games. Those comparisons are poison. They are unfair—those people had different lives, different exposure, different starting points—and they will only make you feel small.

When you compare yourself to others, you can always lose, because there is always someone faster. But when you compare yourself only to your own past, you can always win, because you can always beat 45 with 46. This is why the game is built around a personal best. The bar you are jumping over

is the bar *you* set last time. Every record you break is a real, undeniable victory that belongs entirely to you.

*“There will always be someone better than you. There will never be anyone with more power to beat yesterday's you than you have right now.”*

This mindset does something beautiful: it turns every learner, at every level, into a winner. A beginner crawling from 30 to 35 words is winning just as much as an advanced speaker pushing from 110 to 120. The size of the number does not matter. The direction does. Up is winning. Keep going up.

## The "It Gets Boring" Trap

Let me be honest with you about the biggest danger ahead. It is not that the method is too hard. It is that, after a few weeks, it can start to feel boring. You talk about your morning routine for the tenth time, you run the same sentence list again, and the spark fades. Boredom is the silent killer of language practice. More learners quit from boredom than from difficulty.

The good news is that boredom is easy to beat once you see it coming. The trick is to keep the game fresh. A game stays exciting when it changes. Here are the ways to keep yours alive:

1. **Rotate your topics constantly.** Never speak about the same thing two sessions in a row. Keep a running list of fresh topics—a news story, a childhood memory, your opinion on something, a problem you are solving. Novelty keeps your brain awake.
2. **Switch between the two games.** Some days do the words-per-minute sprint; other days do the translation speed challenge. Variety alone makes practice feel new.

3. **Invent new challenges.** Try a "no um" round where you lose if you say "um." Try speaking about a random word from a dictionary. Try doing two minutes instead of one. Small twists reset your interest.
4. **Run a monthly re-test.** Once a month, repeat the exact same topic and sentence list you used in your very first week. Seeing how far ahead you are now is the biggest motivation boost of all.
5. **Change the reward.** Promise yourself something small when you break a record—a coffee, an episode of a show, a walk. Tie the win to a treat and your brain will crave the practice.

That monthly re-test deserves special attention. When you repeat your Week 1 topic in Week 5 and discover you now say 78 words where you once managed 45, the feeling is electric. You are not imagining your progress anymore—you are watching it on the page. Schedule these re-tests. They are the highlight of the whole game.

## Celebrate the Small Wins

One last thing, and it matters more than it sounds. When you beat your record—even by one word—celebrate it. Out loud. Smile, pump your fist, say "yes!" It feels silly, and it works. Your brain learns from what you reward. When you celebrate a win, you teach your brain that speaking English feels good, and it will want to come back for more.

Do not wait for some far-off day when you are "finally fluent" to feel proud. That day is a mirage; there is always more to learn. Instead, harvest pride from the small wins along the way—the new personal best, the smoother sentence, the day you did not freeze. String enough small wins together and one day you will look back at your log, see the line that climbed from 45 to 200, and realize the impossible thing happened quietly, one beaten record at a time.

This is the end of Part II. You now have the speed, the method, and the scoreboard. The game is set up. The only thing left is to play it—today, and

tomorrow, and the day after—always chasing the one opponent you can always beat.

### **REMEMBER THIS**

- Invisible progress kills motivation; a written number makes your progress visible and keeps you going.
- Keep a dead-simple speaking log: date, topic, words in 60 seconds, and your personal best.
- Run a solo translation speed challenge—race to say your sentences in English for one minute and count how many you finish.
- Use the CEFR targets for your level (A1=25, A2=21, B1=18, B2=16, C1=15 sentences per minute), and remember the count drops as your sentences get richer.
- Compete only with your past self. You can always beat yesterday's you.
- Beat boredom by rotating topics, switching games, inventing twists, and running monthly re-tests.
- Celebrate every record, even by one word—small wins are the fuel that carries you to fluency.

PART THREE

# Words, Sounds & Just Enough Grammar

*Fill your mouth with the right phrases, sharpen your sound, and learn only the grammar that helps you talk.*

## CHAPTER TEN

# Vocabulary That Actually Sticks

*Stop memorizing word lists you forget by Friday. Learn words the way you'll actually use them.*

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**L**et me guess. At some point you sat down with a list of fifty English words. Maybe you found it online, or in an app, or at the back of a textbook. You read them. You wrote them out. You tested yourself, and you felt good, because you got most of them right. Then a week passed, and when you tried to actually speak, almost none of those words came out of your mouth. They were gone. You knew you had studied them, but they refused to appear when you needed them.

You are not lazy, and you are not bad at English. You simply learned those words the wrong way for the goal you have. Your goal is to speak. But the way most people study vocabulary builds a kind of word knowledge that helps you read and listen, not talk. That gap is the most important idea in this chapter, and once you understand it, you will stop wasting your time and start collecting words that actually come when you call them.

This chapter opens Part III of the book, where we look closely at words, sounds, and grammar. We start with words, because words are the raw material of speaking. But as you will see, it is not about how many words you know. It is about how many words you can use.

## Two kinds of vocabulary

Every English learner has two vocabularies living inside them, and they are very different sizes.

The first is your **passive vocabulary**. These are the words you recognize. When you read them or hear them, you understand what they mean. You do not have to stop and think. You just know. Your passive vocabulary

is large, probably much larger than you realize, because recognizing a word is easy. The word does the work of reminding you what it means.

The second is your **active vocabulary**. These are the words you can produce yourself, out loud, in the middle of a real sentence, without anyone showing them to you first. This vocabulary is much smaller. When you speak, your brain has to reach into an empty space and pull out the right word with no hints. That is hard, and it is a completely different skill from recognizing a word on a page.

Here is the problem. Speaking uses your active vocabulary, but almost everything people do when they "study vocabulary" only builds the passive kind. Reading word lists, watching videos with subtitles, doing matching exercises, swiping through flashcards where you see the word and try to remember the meaning. All of that strengthens recognition. None of it trains production. So your passive vocabulary grows and grows, while the active one, the one you actually speak with, barely moves.

*“You do not have a vocabulary problem.  
You have a problem turning the words you  
already know into words you can say.”*

This is good news, honestly. It means you are not starting from zero. You are sitting on a large pile of words you already half-own. Your job is not to find thousands of new words. Your job is to take the useful ones you already recognize and move them across the line, from passive to active. And to do that, there is really only one trick.

## **The one trick: use it out loud**

A word becomes active when you have said it yourself, in your own sentence, out loud, more than once. That is it. That is the whole secret. Not when you have read it. Not when you have understood it. When you have produced it.

Think about why this works. When you only see a word, your brain files it under "things I might recognize later." When you build a sentence around it and say it with your own voice, your brain files it under "things I can do." Those are different shelves. Speaking pulls from the second shelf. So if you never put a word on that shelf, it will never come out when you talk, no matter how many times you have seen it.

This connects directly to what we learned about forgetting back in Chapter 3. Remember, your brain throws away anything it decides you do not use. A word you only recognize looks unused to your brain, because recognizing is passive. But a word you speak looks important, because you are clearly using it. Saying words out loud is not just practice. It is a signal to your memory that says: keep this one.

#### **TRY THIS NOW**

Pick one word you understand but rarely say. Maybe "complicated," or "I'd rather," or "on purpose." Now say three different sentences out loud, right now, using that word about your real life. Out loud, not in your head. For example: "My job is complicated." "The instructions were complicated." "It's complicated to explain." Notice how the third one felt easier than the first. That is the word moving from passive to active, in about twenty seconds.

## **Learn fewer words, but learn them deeper**

When you understand the active-passive split, a strange thing happens. You stop wanting more words. The race to collect vocabulary suddenly looks pointless, because a word you cannot say is just decoration.

So slow down. It is far better to take five words this week and truly make them active, said out loud many times, used in your own real sentences, than to "learn" fifty words you will never speak. Five active words beat fifty passive ones every single time, because the five will actually show up when you open your mouth.

This feels wrong at first. We are taught that more is better, that the student with the bigger word list is winning. But speaking is not a reading test. Nobody will hand you a list and ask you to translate. They will ask you a question and wait for your answer. In that moment, ten words you can use beat a thousand you can only recognize.

## **Learn the useful words first, not the rare ones**

Here is another trap. Learners love rare, impressive words. "Serendipity." "Meticulous." "Ubiquitous." They feel like progress. But you will almost never need them in real conversation, and while you were learning them, you skipped over words you need every day.

A small number of words do most of the work in English. The most frequent few thousand words cover the huge majority of everyday speech. These are the words native speakers actually say all the time, the ones that connect ideas and keep a conversation moving: get, take, mean, though, actually, probably, instead, deal with, figure out, end up. They are not glamorous. They are everywhere. And they are exactly the words you should make active first.

A simple test for whether a word is worth your effort: have you needed it in the last week? Not "is it a nice word," but "did I actually reach for this and not have it?" If yes, it is gold. If you cannot imagine yourself saying it in normal life, let it go for now. There is no shame in learning "annoying" before "exasperating."

*“Rare words make you sound like a dictionary. Common words, used fast and naturally, make you sound like a person.”*

## **The speaking words notebook**

Here is the single best habit for building active vocabulary, and it costs almost nothing. Keep a small notebook, or a note on your phone, and call it your "speaking words." But do not fill it the way you think.

Most people copy words from books or apps into their notebook. That just creates another list of words someone else chose for you. Instead, fill your notebook only with words you personally needed and did not have. You are in a conversation, or talking to yourself, and you hit a wall. You wanted to say something and the English word would not come. That gap is the most valuable thing in your whole study, because it tells you exactly which word your real life is asking for.

When that happens, note down the idea you were missing. Later, find the English word, and write it inside a full example sentence about your own situation. Then say that sentence out loud. This notebook is personal. It is built from your actual gaps, not from some generic list, which is exactly why the words in it stick. You needed them once, which means you will need them again.

## **Always learn words inside sentences**

Never learn a word alone. A word by itself is hard to remember and almost impossible to use, because you do not know how it behaves. Does it come before or after the verb? What word usually follows it? Does it sound natural here? A bare word answers none of that.

Learn the word inside a short, natural example sentence instead, ideally one that is true about your own life. Compare these two ways of learning the word "depend":

Learning the word alone	Learning the word in a sentence
depend = to be decided by something	"It depends on the weather."
Hard to recall, easy to misuse	You also learn it takes "on"
No idea how to put it in a sentence	Ready to say out loud immediately
Stays passive	Becomes active fast

The sentence version teaches you the word and how to use it at the same time. And because you can say the whole sentence out loud, the word is already halfway to active before you even start reviewing it. The little word "on" comes free, glued to "depend," exactly where it belongs.

## Lock words in during your Stopwatch sprints

Earlier in the book you learned the Stopwatch method, where you speak quickly for a short burst, pushing for speed over perfection. Your vocabulary work and your Stopwatch sprints are meant to work together.

Here is how. Take the handful of new words you are trying to make active this week, and deliberately push yourself to use them during your sprints. You are talking fast about your day, and you force in "ended up," "deal with," "I'd rather." It will feel a little forced the first time. By the third or fourth sprint, the word starts arriving on its own, without you planning it. That is the exact moment a word becomes active. You are not reciting it anymore. You are using it.

The speed matters here. Because the Stopwatch does not give you time to think, you are forced to grab the word fast, the same way you will have to grab it in a real conversation. Slow, careful practice trains slow, careful speaking. Fast practice trains the quick reach you actually need.

## Review with spacing, not cramming

You already know from Chapter 3 that your brain forgets on a schedule, and that the cure is to review just before you would forget. Cramming all your reviews into one session feels productive but fades fast. Spreading the same reviews out over days makes them last far longer, for the same total effort.

So review each new word a few times, with growing gaps between each review. Learn it today. See it again tomorrow. Then a few days later. Then a week later. Each time, do not just read it. Say a fresh sentence with it out loud. By the end of that schedule, the word is yours. Here is what that looks like in practice:

When	What you do	Why it works
Day 1 (today)	Learn the word in a sentence, say it out loud 3 times	First contact, and you say it from the start
Day 2 (tomorrow)	Cover the word, try to recall it, say a new sentence	Catches it just before you forget
Day 4 or 5	Use it in a Stopwatch sprint without looking	Forces active recall at speed
About one week later	Use it in real talk or one more sprint	Long gap means deep, lasting memory

Notice that every single review involves saying the word, not just looking at it. A spaced review where you only read the word still mostly builds passive memory. A spaced review where you produce a new sentence builds the active kind. Same schedule, very different result.

## The warning: stop over-collecting

Now the warning, because this is where most learners quietly fail. It is incredibly tempting to keep collecting words. Long lists feel like progress. A notebook with two hundred entries looks impressive. Adding a new word

gives you a little hit of satisfaction, the feeling that you are doing something.

But collecting is not learning, and a word you never use is not vocabulary. It is just ink. If your list grows faster than you can make words active, the list becomes a graveyard. You will never review it all, you will feel guilty, and the words will sit there dead. Worse, the time you spent collecting is time you did not spend speaking.

So set a limit. A handful of new words a week is plenty when you are truly making each one active. If you find a great word but you already have your week's words in progress, write it down and leave it for next week. Protect the rule that every word in your notebook is on its way to your mouth, not just to your page.

*“A word you collected but never said is not progress. It is homework you will never do.”*

## Your weekly vocabulary routine

Let us put everything together into something you can actually run, week after week. It is short on purpose. The whole point is that it fits into a real life and that every step ends with you speaking.

1. **Catch your gaps all week.** Whenever you reach for a word and it is not there, jot down the idea in your speaking words notebook. These gaps choose your words for you.
2. **Pick five.** On day one, choose just five words from your gaps, favoring the common, useful ones over the rare and impressive ones.
3. **Write each in a real sentence.** Put each word inside one true sentence about your own life, never alone. Keep it short and natural.
4. **Say each one out loud, three times.** Right then, on day one, speak each sentence aloud at least three times. This is where the word first

starts to become active.

5. **Review on a spaced schedule.** Revisit the five words tomorrow, then a few days later, then about a week later. Each review, say a new sentence out loud, do not just read.
6. **Feed them into your sprints.** During your Stopwatch practice this week, deliberately force the five words in until they start coming on their own.
7. **Stop at five.** Resist adding more. Let the next gaps wait for next week. Protect the rule that every word is heading toward speech.

Run this for a month and you will have about twenty new words you can genuinely speak, not just recognize. Twenty active words is a real upgrade to your speaking. Compare that to the fifty passive words you would have "learned" and forgotten the old way. Slower on paper, far faster in your actual mouth.

## The shift in your mind

If you take one thing from this chapter, let it be this change in how you think about words. Stop asking "how many words do I know?" Start asking "how many words can I say?" The first question rewards collecting, which feels good and changes nothing. The second rewards speaking, which feels harder and changes everything.

From now on, treat a word as truly learned only when it has come out of your mouth, in your own sentence, without anyone showing it to you first. Everything before that is just a word you are getting ready to learn. The finish line is your voice, not your eyes. Cross it on purpose, a few words at a time, and your speaking vocabulary will finally start to grow where it counts.

### **REMEMBER THIS**

- You have two vocabularies: passive (words you recognize) and active (words you can say). Speaking only uses the active one.
- Most studying builds passive vocabulary. To speak, you must build active vocabulary, and that means producing words, not just recognizing them.
- The one trick: a word becomes active only when you say it out loud, in your own sentence, more than once.
- Learn fewer words but deeper. Five words you can say beat fifty you can only recognize.
- Learn the common, useful words first, not the rare, impressive ones. A good test: did you need it this week?
- Keep a "speaking words" notebook of words you personally needed and did not have, written inside real example sentences.
- Never learn a word alone. Always learn it inside a short, natural sentence.
- Use new words during your Stopwatch sprints to lock them in at speed.
- Review with spacing, not cramming: today, tomorrow, a few days later, a week later, saying a fresh sentence each time.
- Do not over-collect. A word you never say is not vocabulary. Limit yourself to a handful of words a week and make each one active.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# Learn Chunks, Not Words

*Fluent speakers don't build sentences word by word. They grab ready-made pieces.*

---

**H**ere is a question that changes everything once you understand it: how do fluent speakers talk so fast? You might think they have huge vocabularies, or that their brains simply work quicker than yours. That is not the secret. The real secret is that they almost never build sentences from zero. They speak in blocks — ready-made pieces of language that come out as one smooth unit. They are not choosing every single word. They are grabbing whole phrases that they have used hundreds of times before.

These ready-made pieces have a name. Teachers call them **chunks**. A chunk is a group of words that go together naturally and that you store in your memory as one item. "Make a decision" is a chunk. "By the way" is a chunk. "I was wondering if you could help me" is a chunk. When you learn English as separate words and then try to glue them together while you speak, you are slow. You translate. You pause. You make strange combinations that no native speaker would say. But when you learn whole chunks, the words are already glued. You just pull the whole piece off the shelf and use it.

This is the heart of the method in this book: speed before perfection, and speak in ready-made blocks so you don't build every sentence from the ground up. Chunks are those blocks. In this chapter you will learn what kinds of chunks exist, why they make you faster and more natural, how to collect them from the real world, and how to practice them until they come out automatically — without thinking.

## Why Words Are the Wrong Unit

Imagine you want to say "I need to make a decision about my job." If you think in single words, your brain does a lot of work. You find "I", then "need", then "to", then... do I say "make" or "do" or "take" a decision? Each word is a separate problem to solve, and the hardest problems are the small connecting words and the verb-noun pairs. That is where learners freeze. That is where the long pause appears.

Now imagine you already know the chunk "make a decision" as one piece. The whole hard part disappears. You don't choose between "make", "do", and "take" — the correct verb is already inside the chunk. You just say it. Your mouth produces four words in the time it used to take to produce one. This is not a small improvement. This is the difference between speech that flows and speech that stutters.

There is a second reason words are the wrong unit: word-for-word translation. When you think in single words, you naturally reach for the word in your own language first and then look for its English match. This is the trap that keeps so many learners slow forever. Chunks break the trap, because a chunk in English often does not match your language word for word. You can only say it correctly if you have memorized the English version as a whole. So learning chunks forces you to stop translating and start speaking directly in English.

*“Fluency is not knowing more words. It is needing to think about fewer of them.”*

## **The Three Types of Chunks**

Chunks come in three main types. You don't need to memorize these labels to use them, but knowing the types helps you notice chunks everywhere once you start looking. Let's take them one at a time, with plenty of real examples.

### **1. Collocations: words that love each other**

A collocation is a pair or group of words that naturally go together. Some words are simply best friends, and native speakers always put them side by side. You can say "heavy rain" but not "strong rain". You can say "strong coffee" but not "powerful coffee". There is no logical rule — it is just the way the words have learned to live together. If you learn the pair as one chunk, you never have to guess.

Look at how often the verb is the tricky part. We *make* a decision, but we *take* a break. We *do* our homework, but we *make* a mistake. If you only learn the noun ("decision", "break", "mistake"), you still have to guess the verb every time you speak, and you will guess wrong half the time. If you learn the whole collocation, the verb comes for free.

## **2. Fixed expressions: phrases you say exactly the same way**

Fixed expressions are short phrases that almost never change. They do not really carry new information — instead they help you manage the conversation, soften what you say, or buy yourself a moment to think. "By the way" introduces a new topic. "To be honest" prepares the listener for your real opinion. "As far as I know" makes your statement softer and safer. These are pure gold for a learner, because they are short, they are everywhere, and they make you sound natural the moment you use them.

Better still, fixed expressions give your brain a small rest. While your mouth is saying "to be honest", your brain is quietly preparing the next part of your sentence. Fluent speakers use these phrases constantly for exactly this reason. They are like little bridges that keep your speech moving while you think.

## **3. Sentence frames: half-built sentences with a gap**

A sentence frame is a ready-made beginning of a sentence with an empty space at the end for you to fill. "I was wondering if..." is a frame. "The thing is..." is a frame. "It depends on..." is a frame. You memorize the fixed front part once, and then you reuse it thousands of times with different endings.

Frames are incredibly powerful because they do the structural heavy lifting for you. "I was wondering if you could..." is a polite request, fully formed, and you only have to add the ending — "open the window", "send me the file", "explain that again". The grammar is built into the frame. You never have to build a polite question from scratch; you just drop your idea into the gap.

## **Your Starter Set of High-Frequency Chunks**

Below is a starter set you can begin using today. These are some of the most common and useful chunks in everyday English. Don't try to learn all of them at once. Pick five or six, use them in real sentences out loud, and add more as the first ones become automatic.

Chunk	Type	How to use it
make a decision	collocation	"I need to make a decision by Friday."
take a break	collocation	"Let's take a break and continue in ten minutes."
pay attention	collocation	"Sorry, I wasn't paying attention. Can you repeat that?"
heavy rain / heavy traffic	collocation	"I was late because of the heavy traffic."
make a mistake	collocation	"Don't worry, everyone makes mistakes."
by the way	fixed expression	"By the way, did you finish the report?"
to be honest	fixed expression	"To be honest, I'm not sure that's a good idea."
as far as I know	fixed expression	"As far as I know, the meeting is still on."
at the end of the day	fixed expression	"At the end of the day, it's your choice."
kind of / sort of	fixed expression	"It's kind of complicated to explain."
I was wondering if...	sentence frame	"I was wondering if you could help me."
The thing is...	sentence frame	"The thing is, I don't have enough time."
It depends on...	sentence frame	"It depends on how much it costs."
I'd rather...	sentence frame	"I'd rather stay home tonight."
Do you mind if...	sentence frame	"Do you mind if I open the window?"

Chunk	Type	How to use it
What I mean is...	sentence frame	"What I mean is, we should start earlier."
I'm not sure, but...	sentence frame	"I'm not sure, but I think it's closed today."

Notice something about this list. None of these chunks are difficult. Every single word in them is a word you probably already know. The skill is not learning new words — it is learning which words travel together, and storing them as one piece so they come out instantly. That is good news for you, because it means you can become more fluent without expanding your vocabulary at all.

### TRY THIS NOW

Pick three sentence frames from the table above: "I was wondering if...", "The thing is...", and "It depends on...". Say each one out loud five times, finishing it a different way each time. For example: "I was wondering if you're free tomorrow." / "I was wondering if this is the right bus." / "I was wondering if I could ask you something." Don't stop to translate. Speak fast and keep going. In two minutes you will have produced fifteen real, natural sentences — and the front half of each one came out automatically.

## How to Collect Chunks From the Real World

You don't have to invent chunks or find them in a grammar book. They are everywhere — in the shows you watch, the songs you hear, the articles you read, and the conversations around you. The trick is to start *noticing* them. Most learners read or watch passively and only catch single new words. From now on, train your eye to catch whole phrases.

Here is the most important rule of collecting chunks, and it is simple:

*“Always write down the whole phrase,  
never just the single word.”*

When you hear "take a break", do not write "break" in your notebook. Write "take a break". When you read "I'm really looking forward to it", do not write "forward". Write the whole phrase: "looking forward to it". The single word teaches you almost nothing about how to speak. The whole chunk teaches you a piece of fluent English you can use tomorrow. This one habit, kept for a few months, will change your speaking more than any grammar course.

Use these steps to build your own chunk collection:

1. **Watch or read something you enjoy.** A show, a podcast, a YouTube video, a simple article. Enjoyment matters, because you will do more of it.
2. **Catch phrases, not words.** When something sounds natural and useful, pause and notice the whole group of words around it, not just the new word.
3. **Write the full chunk in a notebook or phone note.** Add a short example sentence so you remember how it is used.
4. **Mark the gap in frames.** If it's a sentence frame, write it with dots: "It turns out (that)..." so you remember the part to fill in.
5. **Keep it short.** Five to ten new chunks a week is plenty. Quality and repetition beat a giant list you never review.

Be especially greedy about chunks that appear again and again. If you hear "to be honest" in three different shows, that is a sign it is extremely common and worth owning. The most frequent chunks are the most valuable ones, because you will get the most chances to use them.

## **How to Practice Until It's Automatic**

Collecting chunks is only half the job. A chunk written in a notebook is just ink. A chunk in your mouth is fluency. The goal is to move each chunk from your eyes to your tongue — to the point where it comes out without any thought at all. That only happens through speaking out loud, again and again.

Here is how to practice a chunk so it becomes automatic:

1. **Say it out loud, not in your head.** Silent reading does not train your mouth. Your tongue needs the practice as much as your brain does.
2. **Repeat it until it feels easy.** Say the chunk five or ten times in a row. The first time it feels clumsy. By the tenth time it feels like one smooth word. That smooth feeling is the goal.
3. **Put it into many different sentences.** Take "I'd rather" and finish it ten different ways. The fixed part gets burned into memory while the endings change.
4. **Use it in a real conversation as soon as possible.** The same day if you can. A chunk you actually use sticks far better than one you only drill.
5. **Review yesterday's chunks before adding new ones.** A quick out-loud review keeps old chunks alive while you build new ones.

A powerful way to do this is to build little personal sentences with each chunk — sentences about your own life. Instead of a random example, say something true: "To be honest, I'm a bit tired today." "I was wondering if I should change my job." When the chunk is connected to your real life, your brain holds onto it tightly, and it pops up exactly when you need it in a real conversation.

## Chunks and the Stopwatch

Remember the Stopwatch from earlier in this book — speaking for a fixed time and counting how many words you produce. Chunks are your most powerful tool for pushing that number up. Think about the math. If you build sentences word by word, you might produce forty or fifty words in

a minute, with long pauses in between. But if your speech is built from chunks, each chunk delivers three, four, or five words in a single burst with no pause at all.

A speaker who relies on chunks doesn't just say more words — they say them in smoother bursts, and that smoothness is exactly what listeners hear as "fluent". So the next time you run your Stopwatch practice, set yourself a small goal: use at least five of the chunks from this chapter during the session. You will feel your speed jump. The pauses where you used to hunt for words will start to disappear, because the words are already packed together and ready to go.

This is why chunks fit the whole spirit of this method so perfectly. They are pure speed. They fight translation, they kill pauses, and they make you sound natural — all at the same time. You are not waiting until your English is "good enough". You are grabbing real, ready-made English and putting it in your mouth today.

#### **REMEMBER THIS**

- Fluent speakers don't build sentences word by word. They use chunks — ready-made blocks of language stored as single pieces.
- There are three main types: collocations ("make a decision", "heavy rain"), fixed expressions ("by the way", "to be honest"), and sentence frames ("I was wondering if...", "It depends on...").
- Chunks make you faster, more natural, and stop you translating word for word, because the correct words are already glued together.
- When you collect chunks, always write the whole phrase — never just the single new word.
- Practice out loud, repeat each chunk until it feels like one smooth word, and use it in real sentences about your own life.
- Chunks push your Stopwatch number up: each one delivers several words in one smooth burst, with no pause in between.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# Sound Like You Mean It

*You don't need a perfect accent. You need to be understood—and to sound alive.*

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**L**et me start with the thing that has been quietly stopping you. You hear your own voice in English and you cringe. The sounds come out heavy, slow, foreign. You compare yourself to the people in movies and you think, "I will never sound like that." So you speak more quietly. You speak less. You hide. If any of this is true for you, take a breath. You are about to put down a weight you have carried for years.

Here is the truth that thousands of students needed to hear before anything else clicked: a foreign accent is not a problem. It is not a mistake. It is not something broken that needs fixing. An accent is simply the sound of a person who speaks more than one language. That is an achievement, not an embarrassment. The goal of this chapter is not to erase your accent. The goal is to make your speech *clear* and *confident*, so that the person in front of you understands you easily and enjoys listening to you. Clear beats native. Every single time.

## Free Yourself From Accent Shame

Think about the people you admire who speak English as a second language. Scientists, business leaders, actors, teachers. Many of them have strong accents. You understand them perfectly, and you never once think less of them. Their accent is part of who they are. Nobody is waiting for you to sound like you were born in London or New York. They are waiting to hear what you have to say.

Accent shame does real damage. It makes you speak softly so no one will notice you. It makes you choose small, safe words instead of the words you really mean. It makes you stop in the middle of a sentence to "fix" a sound,

which breaks your rhythm and actually makes you harder to understand. The shame, not the accent, is the thing hurting your communication.

*“Native is not the target. Clear and confident is the target—and you can hit it with the accent you already have.”*

So let's be precise about the real job. Some things about pronunciation genuinely affect whether people understand you. Other things barely matter at all. Most learners waste years polishing tiny sounds that no listener cares about, while ignoring the few things that make the biggest difference. In this chapter you will learn what actually matters, and you will learn simple ways to practice it alone, out loud, starting today.

#### **TRY THIS NOW**

Say this sentence out loud, right now, at a normal volume: "I speak English, and people understand me." Say it three times. The first time, notice if you spoke too quietly. The second time, speak a little louder. The third time, smile while you say it. Hear the difference? That is the energy this chapter is about—not perfect sounds, but a voice that sounds alive and sure.

## **What Actually Makes You Understood**

When listeners struggle to understand a non-native speaker, the cause is usually not a single wrong sound. It is almost always one of three bigger things: word stress, sentence rhythm, or intonation. Get these three right and you can have a strong accent and still be crystal clear. Get them wrong and you can pronounce every individual sound correctly and still confuse people. Let's take them one at a time.

### **1. Word Stress: Hit the Right Syllable**

In English, longer words have one syllable that is louder, longer, and higher than the others. That is the stressed syllable. If you stress the wrong

one, the word can become very hard to recognize, even when every sound is correct.

Take the word "photograph." The stress is on the first part: **PHO**-to-graph. But "photographer" moves the stress: pho-**TO**-grapher. And "photographic" moves it again: pho-to-**GRA**-phic. Same family of words, three different stressed syllables. English does this constantly. The stressed syllable is the part you lean on; the rest you say quickly and lightly.

Here is the powerful part: when you stress the right syllable strongly, listeners forgive almost everything else. They hear the shape of the word and recognize it instantly. So when you learn a new word, learn *where the stress falls* as part of the word itself. Say it out loud with the stress exaggerated. Knock on the table on the strong syllable if it helps your body feel it.

Word	Stressed syllable	Say it like
important	second	im-POR-tant
develop	second	de-VEL-op
comfortable	first	COMF-ter-ble
decision	second	de-CI-sion
opportunity	third	op-por-TU-ni-ty

## 2. Sentence Rhythm: Stress the Important Words, Rush the Rest

This is the secret that changes everything. English is a "stress-timed" language. That means we do not give every word equal time. We land hard on the important words—the ones carrying the meaning—and we rush quickly and quietly through the small connecting words.

The important words are usually nouns, main verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The small words we rush are usually articles, prepositions, pronouns, and helping verbs: *a, the, to, of, for, in, is, are, was, can, will, you, them*. Look at this sentence with the strong words in capitals:

"I **WANT** to **GO** to the **STORE** and **BUY** some **BREAD**."

Say it out loud. Hit the capital words hard and long. Let everything else slide by fast and soft. Notice that the small words almost disappear—"to the" becomes "tuhthuh," quick and light. That blurring is not lazy or wrong. That is correct, natural English. Many learners do the opposite: they give every word the same heavy weight, which makes their speech sound robotic and, surprisingly, harder to follow. When you let the small words shrink, the important words shine, and listeners catch your meaning at once.

*“Don't speak every word equally. Lean hard on what matters and let the rest fly by. That single habit will transform how clear you sound.”*

### **3. Intonation: The Music of Meaning and Emotion**

Intonation is the rise and fall of your voice—the melody of the sentence. It carries an enormous amount of meaning, and it is where energy and emotion live. A flat voice sounds bored, unsure, or even rude, no matter how correct your words are. A voice that rises and falls naturally sounds friendly, confident, and engaged.

Two simple patterns will take you a long way. First, your voice usually *falls* at the end of a statement or a normal "wh-" question. "I live in Madrid." (voice goes down at the end). "Where do you work?" (down). This falling tone sounds sure and finished. Second, your voice usually *rises* at the end of a yes/no question. "Do you live here?" (voice goes up). "Are you ready?" (up). This rising tone invites an answer.

But intonation is not only grammar. It is feeling. The same three words—"You did that"—can be a calm statement, a shocked question, or an angry accusation, depending entirely on your melody. This is wonderful news for you, because it means emotion can do work that perfect sounds cannot. If you put real feeling into your voice, people lean in and understand you,

even through a strong accent. A lively, expressive voice with imperfect sounds beats a flat, perfect-sounding voice every time.

### TRY THIS NOW

Say the word "really" four different ways, out loud: as surprise ("Really?!"), as boredom ("Really."), as doubt ("Really...?"), and as excitement ("Really!"). One word, four meanings, all from intonation. Feel your voice move. That movement is the music listeners are tuned to. Practicing it for one minute a day will do more for your clarity than weeks of worrying about single letters.

## Linking: Why Native Speech Sounds Like One Long Word

Have you ever felt that fluent speakers run all their words together so you can't find where one ends and the next begins? That is linking, and it is a real feature of natural English. When one word ends in a consonant and the next begins with a vowel, the sounds connect. "Turn it off" sounds like "tur-ni-toff." "An apple" sounds like "a-napple." "Pick it up" sounds like "pi-ki-tup."

You do not need to force linking; it tends to happen on its own once you stop pausing between every word and start speaking in smooth groups. But understanding linking helps in two ways. It makes *you* easier to understand, because chopped-up, word-by-word speech is actually harder for listeners to follow. And it makes *others* easier for you to understand, because now you know why their words flow together. Try saying "thank you" as "than-kyou" and "not at all" as "no-ta-tall." Smooth, connected, easy.

## A Few Sounds That Cause Real Confusion

I promised you no phonetics lecture, and I will keep that promise. Most individual sounds matter far less than you fear, because listeners use context to fill in small gaps. But a handful of sound mix-ups can genuinely

cause confusion, so they are worth a little attention. Here is general, practical guidance—not rules to memorize, just things to be aware of.

The "th" sound (as in *think* and *this*) does not exist in many languages, so learners often replace it with "t," "s," "d," or "z." This rarely causes serious confusion, so do not stress about it. If you want to try, put the tip of your tongue lightly between your teeth and push air past it. If it stays a soft "d" or "z," that is completely fine—people will still understand you.

The short "i" versus long "ee" pair causes more trouble—think of "ship" versus "sheep," or "live" versus "leave." These can change meaning, so they are worth practicing. The short "i" is quick and relaxed; the long "ee" is longer and tighter, like a small smile. Say a few pairs out loud and feel the difference in your mouth.

Word endings matter too. Many learners drop the final consonant—saying "wan" instead of "want," or "hep" instead of "help." Those small endings often carry grammar (past tense "-ed," plural "-s"), so try to let them be heard. You do not need to hit them hard; just don't swallow them completely.

That is honestly enough. If you spend your energy on word stress, rhythm, and intonation, and you give a little care to these few sounds, you will be clear. Do not fall into the trap of hunting down every tiny sound. It is not where the value is.

## **How to Actually Improve—Alone, Out Loud**

Knowing what matters is not the same as changing how you speak. You change how you speak the same way you change anything physical: by doing it, repeatedly, out loud. Here are five methods you can use by yourself, today, with nothing but your phone and your voice.

### **Method 1: Shadowing**

You met shadowing back in Chapter Eight, and it is your single best tool for rhythm and intonation. Pick a short clip of someone speaking English

you like—thirty seconds is plenty. Play a sentence, then immediately copy it out loud, trying to match not just the words but the *music*: where they go up, where they go down, which words they hit hard, where they speed up. Do not aim for the sounds. Aim for the melody and the rhythm. Your mouth will learn the pattern by imitation, the same way you learned your first language. Five minutes a day of focused shadowing will reshape your speech faster than anything else.

### **Method 2: Record and Compare**

Your ears lie to you while you speak, because you are busy speaking. So record yourself. Use your phone to record one or two sentences, then listen back. It will feel uncomfortable at first—that is normal, everyone hates their own recorded voice. Listen for one thing only: did you sound flat, or did your voice move? Are you rushing or mumbling the important words? Then record the original speaker, or shadow them, and compare. You will hear the gap clearly, and hearing the gap is how you close it.

### **Method 3: Slow Down, Then Speed Up**

When a sentence feels hard, say it very slowly first—slow enough to place the stress and the melody on purpose. Exaggerate everything. Then say it again a little faster. Then at normal speed. By the third or fourth time, the rhythm is in your mouth and you no longer have to think about it. This is the bridge between careful practice and natural, fast speech.

### **Method 4: Exaggerate the Stress on Purpose**

Most learners are too gentle with stress. Their "loud" word is only slightly louder than the rest, so the rhythm stays flat. The fix feels silly but works: overdo it. Make the stressed syllables almost ridiculously strong—louder, longer, higher. Yes, it will feel like too much. It is not. When you exaggerate in practice, the real version that comes out in conversation lands just right. Bored, careful speakers stay flat. Brave, exaggerating practicers end up sounding natural.

### **Method 5: Read Aloud With Feeling**

Take any short text—a paragraph from a book, a quote, a children's story—and read it out loud as if you were performing it for someone. Add emotion. Be dramatic. Let your voice rise and fall. The point is not to read perfectly; it is to train your voice to move and to get comfortable making sound. Children's stories are wonderful for this because they invite big, expressive reading. Ten minutes of reading aloud with feeling does more than an hour of silent study.

### **TRY THIS NOW**

Pick one short sentence you say often in English—maybe "Nice to meet you" or "Can I have a coffee, please." Record yourself saying it on your phone. Then say it again, this time exaggerating the stress and adding a warm, friendly melody. Record that too. Play both back. Keep the one that sounds more alive—and use it for real next time.

## **Energy Is the Bridge to What Comes Next**

Everything in this chapter points toward one idea: your voice has to move and it has to carry feeling. Flat, quiet, careful speech is hard to understand, no matter how correct the sounds are. A voice with rhythm, melody, and energy is easy to understand and a pleasure to hear, even with a strong accent.

This is exactly why the next chapters push you to speak louder and to express emotion. Volume and feeling are not separate from pronunciation—they are part of it. When you speak up and let your voice show what you mean, your stress, your rhythm, and your intonation all naturally improve at the same time. A confident speaker who lets emotion through is, almost automatically, a clear speaker.

So stop chasing the perfect accent. It is a finish line that does not exist, and chasing it only makes you quieter and more afraid. Chase clarity. Chase energy. Chase a voice that sounds like you actually mean what you say. That is a goal you can reach—starting with the very next sentence you speak out loud.

### REMEMBER THIS

- A foreign accent is not a problem. The goal is clear and confident, never "native."
- Three things make you understood: word stress (hit the right syllable), sentence rhythm (lean on important words, rush the small ones), and intonation (let your voice rise and fall).
- English is stress-timed—don't give every word equal weight. Let the little words shrink.
- Intonation carries emotion. A lively, expressive voice beats a flat, "perfect" one every time.
- Linking is natural: when words flow together smoothly, you are easier to understand, not harder.
- Only a few sounds truly cause confusion (like "ship/sheep" and dropped word endings). Don't waste energy hunting every tiny sound.
- Improve out loud, alone: shadow speakers, record and compare, slow down then speed up, exaggerate stress, and read aloud with feeling.
- Energy and volume are part of pronunciation. Speak up, mean it, and clarity follows.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# The Five Rules of Bold Speaking

*Five small rules that turn a quiet, nervous voice into one people lean in to hear.*

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**H**ere is something you may not want to hear, but you need to: your English is probably better than your speaking sounds. The words are in your head. The grammar is in your notebook. The problem is not knowledge — it is delivery. You speak too slowly, too quietly, with a flat voice and long, frozen pauses. And all of that makes you sound like a beginner, even when you are not.

This chapter fixes that. Not with more vocabulary. Not with more grammar drills. With five simple rules you apply to your voice every single time you open your mouth in English. I have used these rules with more than eight thousand students, and they work fast — sometimes within a single practice session. The students call them the "iiiiii" rules, because all five start the same way in their minds: speak faster, speak louder, speak with feeling, stay clear, keep flowing. Five small habits. One bold speaker.

Read them once, then practice them on purpose. They are not personality traits — they are skills. You are not "born confident." You build it, one rule at a time.

## The Five Rules at a Glance

## THE FIVE RULES

#	Rule	What it does
1	Speak faster	Kills translation, builds momentum
2	Express emotion	Makes you natural, memorable, and easier to remember
3	Speak louder	Volume creates confidence and presence
4	Be accurate enough	Keeps your meaning clear — the one accuracy anchor
5	Avoid long pauses	Keeps the sound flowing; fills gaps with English, not silence

Notice that only one of the five is about grammar. That is on purpose. Most learners spend ninety percent of their energy on accuracy and almost none on speed, volume, emotion, and flow. That is exactly backwards. Let us go through each rule, learner to learner, so you know what it means, why it helps, and how to practice it alone.

### Rule 1 — Speak Faster

When you speak slowly, you are usually doing one thing: translating. You hear a thought in your native language, you search for the English word, you check it, then you say it. That whole process leaks out as crawling, broken speech with a pause before every word.

Speaking faster breaks the translation habit by force. When you push your pace, your brain simply does not have time to translate — so it stops trying and starts pulling English directly. This is the secret most people miss. Speed is not just a result of fluency; speed is a tool that creates fluency. You go fast on purpose, and fluency follows.

Faster speech also builds momentum. A car is hard to push from a standstill, but easy to keep rolling once it moves. Your mouth is the same. The first sentence is the hardest; once words are flowing, the next ones come easier. Speed keeps the engine running.

How to practice alone: take a simple topic — your morning, your job, your last meal — and talk about it as fast as you can while still forming real words. Do not stop to fix mistakes. Do not slow down to find the "perfect" word; grab a simpler one and keep going. Push until it feels slightly uncomfortable, slightly out of control. That edge is where growth lives. Then do it again. Each round, your "fast" gets smoother.

*“Speed is not the prize you win at the end of fluency. Speed is the tool that builds it.”*

## **Rule 2 — Express Emotion**

Say this sentence flat, like a robot: "I had a great weekend." Now say it again with real feeling — eyes wide, voice rising, a smile in your throat: "I had a GREAT weekend!" Same words. Completely different speaker. The first sounds like a textbook. The second sounds like a human being.

Emotion does three powerful things for you. First, it makes you natural — real English rises and falls; it is not a flat line. Second, it makes you memorable. People forget perfect grammar in seconds, but they remember how you made them feel. Third — and this surprises learners — emotion helps your own memory. When you say a word with feeling, your brain marks it as important and stores it deeper. Words spoken with emotion stick. Flat words fade.

Emotion also pulls your attention away from fear. When you are busy feeling the meaning of your words, you are too busy to feel nervous about your accent or your grammar. Emotion crowds out anxiety.

How to practice alone: take one sentence and say it five ways — happy, angry, surprised, sad, excited. Exaggerate. Push it further than feels normal; on a recording, "too much" usually sounds just right. Let your voice go up and down. Move your hands. Make a face. You are not being silly — you are training your voice to carry feeling instead of running flat.

### TRY THIS NOW

Pick one sentence: "You won't believe what happened to me today." Say it out loud six times. First as a robot — flat and dead. Then as someone bursting with exciting news. Then whisper it like a secret. Then shout it like a warning. Then say it bored. Then say it terrified. Feel how the SAME words become six different living things. That range is what bold speakers have — and you just proved you have it too.

## Rule 3 — Speak Louder

A quiet voice tells everyone one thing: I am afraid. You may not mean to send that message, but you do. When you mumble, when your volume drops at the end of every sentence, when people keep saying "Sorry, what?" — your low volume is broadcasting fear before your words even land.

Volume works in the other direction too. When you speak louder, your body believes you are confident, and confidence follows the volume. This is the trick: you do not have to feel brave first. You raise your voice, and the bravery catches up. Fake the volume, and you build the real thing. Loud speech also forces clearer sound — you cannot mumble at full volume — so people understand you more easily, which makes them respond well, which makes you feel even more confident. It is a loop, and you can start it on purpose.

Loud does not mean shouting at people. It means speaking from your chest with energy, so a person across a room could hear you clearly. Most learners speak at about half the volume they should. Doubling it feels strange at first and sounds completely normal to everyone else.

How to practice alone: read a paragraph at your normal volume, then read it again twice as loud. Then louder still — loud enough that someone in the next room would hear you. Notice how your voice steadies and your words sharpen. Practice ending your sentences strong instead of letting them fade into a whisper. Strong endings sound certain.

*“You do not raise your voice because you feel confident. You feel confident because you raised your voice.”*

#### **Rule 4 – Be Accurate Enough**

Here is the balance, and it matters. The first three rules push you to let go — go faster, go louder, feel more. But if you throw away all your grammar in the rush, no one will understand you, and that helps no one. So this fourth rule is your anchor: be accurate *enough*.

Read that word carefully — *enough*. Not perfect. Enough. Your job while speaking is to keep your meaning clear, not to win a grammar exam. "Yesterday I go to the market" is not perfect, but it is perfectly clear, and a real listener understands you instantly. So keep moving. But "Market I yesterday is go" has broken so badly that meaning is lost — that is where you have gone too far, and accuracy needs to step back in.

So this is where accuracy lives: in service of clarity, not in place of speed. Aim for the few things that carry meaning — the right verb, a sensible word order, the basic tense. Let the small things go. A missing "the," a slightly wrong preposition, an "s" that fell off a verb — none of those stop a listener from understanding you. Chasing them in the moment is what makes you freeze.

How to practice alone: this is the one rule you check *after* you speak, not during. Speak fast and free first. Then, if you recorded yourself, listen back and find ONE pattern of mistake — just one — that actually muddled your meaning. Fix that one thing on your next round. Over weeks, your "enough" gets higher and higher, automatically, without you ever slowing down in the moment.

#### **Rule 5 – Avoid Long Pauses**

Watch what happens when a learner gets stuck: total silence. The mouth closes, the eyes search the ceiling, and three, four, five seconds of dead air pass. That silence is loud. It screams panic, and it breaks the flow you

worked so hard to build. The fix is simple — when you need a moment, fill it with English sound instead of silence.

Native speakers pause all the time. They just do not pause silently. They fill the gap with little phrases that buy thinking time while keeping the sound alive. These are called fillers, and they are not lazy or wrong — they are real, natural English, and they keep you in the driver's seat.

Keep a handful ready, on the tip of your tongue:

### ENGLISH FILLERS TO KEEP FLOWING

When you need to...	Say this instead of going silent
Buy a second to think	"Well..." / "Let me think..." / "Hmm, how do I say this..."
Connect your thoughts	"You know..." / "I mean..." / "So, basically..."
Restart a sentence	"What I'm trying to say is..." / "Let me put it this way..."
Add a bit more	"And another thing..." / "Actually..." / "The thing is..."

The goal is not to fill every second with noise — it is to never let silence freeze you. A short filler keeps your engine running while your brain finds the next word. The sound never stops, so the fear never gets a chance to grow.

How to practice alone: speak about a topic and forbid yourself from going silent. The moment you feel a gap coming, drop in a filler — "well... you know... let me think..." — and keep going. It feels strange at first, then it becomes automatic. Soon you will fill gaps with English without even noticing, exactly like a confident speaker.

## Score Yourself: The Stopwatch Sprint

Rules you only read are rules you forget. So turn them into a game you can score. Here is how to use the five rules during a Stopwatch sprint — your daily two-minute speaking burst.

Set a timer for two minutes. Pick any topic. Hit start and speak — out loud, no stopping, until the timer ends. Record it if you can. Then, while it is fresh, give yourself a score from one to five on each rule:

### YOUR FIVE-RULE SCORECARD

Rule	Ask yourself	Score (1-5)
Faster	Did I keep moving, or did I crawl?	___
Emotion	Did my voice rise and fall, or stay flat?	___
Louder	Could someone across the room hear me?	___
Accurate enough	Was my meaning clear the whole time?	___
No long pauses	Did I fill gaps with English, not silence?	___

Add up your five scores. That is your Bold Speaking number, out of twenty-five. Write it down. Tomorrow, sprint again and try to beat it. Do not chase a perfect score — chase a rising one. Most learners start around twelve and climb steadily over a few weeks. The number itself does not matter; watching it grow does. It proves, in your own voice, that boldness is a skill you are building, not a gift you were waiting for.

One more tip: do not try to max out all five rules at once in the beginning. Pick your weakest one and focus on it for a few days. If your voice is too quiet, make this week the Louder week. If you freeze in silence, make it the No-Pauses week. Improve one rule, and the others tend to rise with it, because they all feed the same thing — momentum.

*“You are not waiting to become a confident speaker. With every sprint, you are already becoming one.”*

So here is the truth to carry out of this chapter. Boldness in English is not about knowing more words. It is about how you deliver the words you

already have. Go faster than feels safe. Put your heart in your voice. Speak up so the room can hear you. Stay clear enough to be understood. And never, ever freeze into silence — keep the English flowing. Five small rules. Apply them today, in your very next sentence, and you will sound like a different speaker by the end of the week.

#### REMEMBER THIS

- **Speak faster** — speed kills translation and builds momentum; push to the edge of comfort.
- **Express emotion** — feeling makes you natural, memorable, and even helps you remember words.
- **Speak louder** — fake the volume first and real confidence follows; finish sentences strong.
- **Be accurate enough** — clear, not perfect; fix one mistake pattern after you speak, never during.
- **Avoid long pauses** — fill gaps with English fillers ("well...", "let me think...", "you know...") instead of silence.
- **Score yourself** — rate all five rules out of twenty-five after each Stopwatch sprint, and beat your number.
- **Boldness is a skill** — you are not born with it; you build it, one rule and one sprint at a time.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# Grammar You Can Actually Use

*You already know more grammar than you'll ever need to speak. The problem is using it—not learning more.*

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**L**et me guess something about you. You have studied grammar. Maybe for years. You have notebooks full of rules. You know what the past perfect continuous is. You can probably name three different conditionals. And yet, when someone asks you a simple question in English—"So, what did you do this weekend?"—your mind goes quiet, your heart speeds up, and the words come out slow and shaky, if they come out at all.

If that sounds like you, I have good news. Your problem is not a lack of grammar. Your problem is the opposite. You have collected so much grammar that you are now standing in front of a giant warehouse of rules, frozen, unable to find the one box you need while the conversation moves on without you. You don't need to build a bigger warehouse. You need to take a few boxes out, open them, and use what's inside until it feels like part of your hand.

This chapter closes Part III, and it carries the simplest and most freeing message in this whole book: **you can speak English well with a surprisingly small amount of grammar.** Not perfect grammar. Useful grammar. The kind that lets you tell a story, ask for what you want, talk about your plans, and share your opinion. That is what real conversation is made of, and it runs on a handful of structures you almost certainly already half-know.

## The Lie You've Been Told

Somewhere along the way, you were taught that grammar is a ladder. First you learn the present simple, then the present continuous, then the past, then the present perfect, then the past perfect, then conditionals, then

the passive, then reported speech—and only when you reach the top of the ladder, only when you have mastered every rule and memorized every exception, are you finally "ready" to speak.

This is not true. It was never true. And it is the single biggest reason so many intelligent, hard-working learners stay silent for years.

Think about how a native child learns. A five-year-old cannot explain a single grammar rule. Ask a child what the present perfect is and they will look at you like you're strange. But that same child can tell you, with total confidence, "I've already eaten, and I don't want any more, and my brother took my toy and I'm angry at him." That is several "advanced" structures in one breath, used perfectly—by someone who has never opened a grammar book. The child learned grammar by *using language*, not by studying it.

You are not a child, and you don't have ten years to absorb English by accident. So here is the shortcut: identify the few structures that do the heavy lifting in everyday speech, learn each one simply, and then drill them out loud until they become automatic. That's it. That's the whole method. The rest—the rare tenses, the tricky exceptions, the elegant flourishes—can wait until you're already speaking comfortably. Polish comes after fluency, never before.

*“You don't have a grammar problem. You have a using problem. The cure is not more study—it's your own voice, out loud, again and again.”*

## **The Structures That Actually Carry Conversation**

Here is the core. If you can use the structures in this table—not name them, not explain them, but *use* them when you're talking—you can handle the vast majority of everyday English conversation. Look at the right-hand column most carefully. It tells you what each structure lets you *do*, because that is the only reason to learn it.

Structure	Simple Example	What It Lets You DO
Present simple	I work in a hospital. She lives nearby.	Talk about facts, habits, and routines—who you are and what you usually do.
Present continuous	I'm working right now. They're waiting.	Talk about what's happening now and around now.
Past simple	I went home. We saw a film. She called me.	Tell stories. Say what happened. This is the engine of every conversation about your day, your weekend, your life.
Going to / will	I'm going to call her. I'll help you.	Talk about plans, intentions, and decisions about the future.
Present perfect	I've been to Italy. Have you eaten?	Talk about life experience and recent events without saying exactly when.
Questions	Where do you live? Did you see it? Can you help?	Keep a conversation alive. Get information. Show interest in the other person.
Negatives	I don't know. She didn't come. I'm not sure.	Say no, disagree gently, and express what is not the case.
Modals (can, should, would)	Can you help? You should rest. I'd love to.	Ask for things, give advice, be polite, and talk about possibility.
Connectors (because, but, so, although)	I'm tired because I worked late, so I'll go home.	Join short ideas into real, flowing speech instead of choppy fragments.

That's it. That's the list. Read it again and let it sink in: this is not the beginning of grammar with a thousand more chapters to come. For the purpose of *speaking*, this is most of what you need. Everything else is either a

small variation on these, or a rare guest you'll meet occasionally and can learn when it shows up.

## What Each One Is Really For

Let's walk through these quickly—not to study them as theory, but to see why each one earns its place in your speaking toolkit.

### The two present tenses: now and usually

Present simple is for things that are generally true: *I live in Baku. I drink coffee in the morning. My job is stressful.* Present continuous is for things happening at this moment or this period: *I'm learning English. I'm reading a great book right now.* Between these two, you can describe your whole life and your present moment. Don't agonize over the line between them—listeners understand you either way. Just get comfortable producing both.

### Past simple: the storytelling engine

If you master only one tense for speaking, make it this one. Almost everything people talk about in real conversation already happened: *I went, I saw, I said, I felt, I bought, I forgot.* Yes, English has irregular past verbs, and yes, there are a lot of them. But you don't need all of them at once. You need the fifty or so that come up constantly. Learn those by using them in real stories, and the rest will arrive over time.

### Going to and will: your future

You do not need to study the four or five "future forms" that textbooks love to list. For speaking, two will carry you almost everywhere. Use *going to* for plans you've already made—*I'm going to visit my family next week.* Use *will* for decisions you make as you speak, offers, and promises—*I'll get it. I'll call you tomorrow.* If you sometimes mix them up, nobody will misunderstand you. Speak first.

### Present perfect: experience and "have you ever"

This one scares learners more than it should. Its main job in conversation is simple: talk about experiences in your life without giving a date. *Have you ever tried sushi? I've never been to London. I've already finished.* Learn it as a few ready-made patterns—*Have you ever...?, I've never..., I've already...*—rather than as a rule, and it will start to feel natural fast.

### **Questions and negatives: the other half of talking**

A conversation is not a speech. It's a back-and-forth. That means you must be able to ask things—*Where? When? Why? Did you? Have you? Can you?*—and to say no and disagree—*I don't think so. I'm not sure. That didn't work.* Many learners drill only positive statements and then freeze the moment they need to ask a question. Don't let that be you. Practice questions and negatives just as much as statements.

### **Modals: politeness and possibility**

A few small words do enormous work. *Can* for ability and requests. *Should* for advice. *Would* for politeness and imagined situations (*I'd like..., I'd love to..., Would you mind...?*). With just *can*, *should*, and *would*, you can ask for help, give advice, and sound polite and warm—three things you'll do in almost every conversation.

### **Connectors: turning fragments into speech**

This is the secret upgrade most learners skip. Fluent-sounding speech is not made of longer words—it's made of joined ideas. *Because* gives reasons. *But* shows contrast. *So* shows results. *Although* adds a twist. Compare: "I'm tired. I worked late. I will go home." versus "I'm tired because I worked late, so I'm going to go home." Same vocabulary. Completely different impression. Four little connectors will make you sound twice as fluent overnight.

## **From Rule to Reflex: How to Actually Drill It**

Here is where most grammar study goes wrong. People learn a structure, do a few written exercises, tick a box, and move on—and then wonder why

it never shows up when they speak. Written exercises build a kind of slow, careful knowledge. Speaking needs fast, automatic knowledge. These are not the same thing, and you only build the second kind by speaking.

So here is the method that turns a rule into a reflex. Use it for each structure above, one at a time, in short focused bursts—what this book calls sprints.

1. **Learn the structure simply.** One small explanation, one clear example pattern. Five minutes, not five days. If you understand *I went / I didn't go / Did you go?*, you understand enough. Close the book.
2. **Pick a real-life topic.** Not "fill in the blank" sentences—real ones about your actual life. For past simple, that's your real weekend, your real morning, your real childhood.
3. **Say twenty sentences out loud.** Out loud is not optional. Whisper if you must, but move your mouth. *Yesterday I woke up late. I drank coffee. I went to work. I forgot my phone.* Keep going until twenty real sentences are out of your body.
4. **Add a question and a negative every time.** *Did you sleep well? I didn't have time for breakfast.* This keeps both halves of conversation alive.
5. **Join two ideas with a connector.** *I went to work, but I was late because I overslept.* Now you're not drilling grammar anymore—you're speaking.
6. **Come back to it tomorrow.** A structure becomes automatic through repetition across days, not through one long session. Ten minutes a day beats two hours once.

Notice what happens here. By step five, the line between "grammar practice" and "speaking" has disappeared. That is the goal. Grammar is not a subject you finish and then start speaking. Grammar *becomes* speaking when you drill it out loud in real sentences. It stops being something in your head and becomes something in your mouth.

### TRY THIS NOW

Pick the past simple. Set a timer for three minutes. Out loud, tell the story of your day yesterday, from waking up to going to bed—in short, simple sentences. *I woke up. I made breakfast. I went to work.* Don't stop to fix mistakes. Don't reach for fancy words. Just keep the sentences coming until the timer ends. Did the words start to flow more easily near the end? That feeling—grammar turning into speech—is exactly what you're training. Do this once a day this week with a different tense each day.

## The Trap: Studying Grammar to Avoid Speaking

Now I have to be honest with you, because this is important. For a lot of learners, grammar study has quietly become a hiding place.

Think about it. Studying grammar feels productive. You sit down, you open a book, you do exercises, you get answers right, you feel like you're improving. It's comfortable. It's safe. Nobody can laugh at your accent while you fill in a worksheet. And at the end you can tell yourself, "I worked on my English today."

But speaking is uncomfortable. Speaking means making mistakes in front of other people. Speaking means hearing yourself sound less smart than you feel. Speaking means risk. And so, without ever quite admitting it, many learners reach for "just a little more grammar" as a way to delay the scary thing. They tell themselves they'll speak once they've mastered the conditionals. Then once they've mastered the passive. Then once they've reviewed the perfect tenses one more time. The day of speaking keeps moving into the future, and it never arrives.

If any part of that stung a little, good—it means you recognized yourself, and recognizing it is how you escape it. More grammar will not make you brave. Only speaking makes you brave. The discomfort you're avoiding is not a sign that you're not ready; it's the exact feeling of getting better. You have to walk straight into it.

*“Grammar study can feel like progress while it's actually a way to avoid the one thing that creates progress: opening your mouth.”*

So here is a simple rule to protect yourself: for every minute you spend studying grammar, spend at least three minutes speaking it out loud. If you find yourself studying far more than you're speaking, you are not preparing to speak. You are avoiding it. Flip the ratio, and your English will change faster than years of quiet study ever moved it.

## **Permission to Be Imperfect**

One last thing, and it's the thing I most want you to carry out of this chapter. You are allowed to make grammar mistakes while you speak. In fact, you must, because there is no other path. Every fluent speaker you admire built their fluency on a mountain of mistakes they made out loud.

When you say "I goed to the shop," the person in front of you understands you completely. The communication worked. That is what language is for. The small error did not stop the message—and as you keep speaking, errors like that quietly fix themselves through use, far more reliably than through any rule you memorize. Worrying about them in advance only slows you down and keeps you silent.

So give yourself permission. Use the small set of structures in this chapter. Use them imperfectly. Use them out loud, every day, in real sentences about your real life. Let your mistakes happen and let them teach you. That is not the lazy path to English—it is the only path that has ever worked for anyone, including every fluent person you've ever met.

You already have the grammar. Part III has given you the structures that matter and the way to make them automatic. Now the work is no longer in your books. It's in your mouth. Go use what you have.

### REMEMBER THIS

- You don't need more grammar to speak—you need to use the grammar you already have.
- A small set of core structures carries the vast majority of everyday conversation: present simple and continuous, past simple, going to/will, present perfect, questions, negatives, the modals can/should/would, and connectors like because, but, so, and although.
- Learn what each structure lets you DO in conversation—not its name or its theory.
- Turn a rule into a reflex by drilling it out loud in twenty real sentences about your own life, with a question, a negative, and a connector mixed in.
- Grammar becomes speaking when you say it out loud—it is not a subject you finish before you start talking.
- Watch out for grammar study as a hiding place. If you study far more than you speak, you're avoiding the real work. Speak at least three minutes for every minute you study.
- You are allowed to make mistakes. Communication that works beats grammar that's perfect. Fluency first, polish later.

PART FOUR

# Speaking with Real People

*Leaving the safety of solo practice—how to start conversations, survive the panic, and find people to talk to.*

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# Your First Real Conversations

*How to go from talking to yourself to talking to a human—without panicking.*

---

**F**or weeks now, you have been speaking alone. You have talked to your mirror, to your phone, to the empty room. You have repeated chunks out loud and answered your own questions. That work was real, and it changed you. But there is a moment every learner reaches—maybe you are at it right now—when a quiet voice inside asks: "Yes, but can I do this with a real person?"

This chapter is about saying yes. It is about the jump from speaking to yourself to speaking with another human being. And I want to tell you the truth before we start: that jump feels bigger than it actually is. The gap in your head is wide and frightening. The gap in real life is small. You are going to step across it gently, one small stair at a time, and by the end of this chapter you will have a plan you can use today.

## Why your heart beats faster

Let us be honest about the nerves first, because pretending they do not exist never helps. When you imagine speaking English with a real person, your body reacts. Your heart speeds up. Your mouth goes dry. Your mind, which was so full of words a minute ago, suddenly feels empty. You think: "What if I make a mistake? What if they don't understand me? What if they laugh?"

This is completely normal. It is not a sign that you are bad at English. It is a sign that you care. Every single one of the 8,000-plus students I have worked with felt this. The confident-looking ones felt it too—they just learned to act before the fear finished talking.

Here is the secret that changes everything: **the other person is not your judge.** The cashier, the tourist, the friend on the other end of a voice message—they are not grading your grammar. They are busy, kind, distracted, normal humans who want one simple thing: to understand and be understood. When you stop performing for an imaginary teacher and start connecting with a real person, half the fear disappears.

*“Your goal in your first conversations is not perfect English. It is connection. Speak to be understood, not to be graded.”*

## **The staircase: start small, climb slowly**

You do not learn to swim by jumping into the deep ocean during a storm. You start in the shallow end where your feet touch the ground. Real conversations work the same way. There is a staircase, and each stair is a little harder than the one below it. The trick is to start on a low stair—a short, friendly, low-pressure exchange—and only climb when you are ready.

Here is the staircase. Notice how the early stairs are short and have almost no risk. If something goes wrong, the whole thing is over in ten seconds and nobody remembers it.

1. **Talk to an AI voice assistant.** Siri, Alexa, Google, or an AI chat app that speaks. It never judges you, never gets bored, and you can repeat as many times as you like. This is the safest possible first stair.
2. **Send a short voice note to a friend.** Ten seconds. "Hi, just testing my English—hope you have a great day!" You can record it three times and send the best one. No live pressure.
3. **Order food or a drink in English.** A cafe, a fast-food counter, a shop. The script is short and predictable. You know what they will say, and you know what you will say back.
4. **Help a stranger.** Give directions, say the time, point to something. A tiny act of kindness in English. It feels good and it is over fast.

5. **A short small-talk exchange.** "Nice weather today." "The line is long, isn't it?" Five seconds with a stranger waiting in a queue.
6. **A real back-and-forth conversation.** A language partner, a colleague, a new friend. This is the top of the staircase—and once you have climbed the lower stairs, you will arrive here without panic.

Do not skip to stair six on your first day. Many learners do, have a hard time, and decide they are "not ready" for speaking. They were ready—they just started on the wrong stair. Begin low. Win small. Climb.

#### **TRY THIS NOW**

Pick up your phone and open your voice assistant. Ask it three things out loud in English right now: "What's the weather today?", "Set a timer for two minutes", and "Tell me a joke." That is it. You just had a real spoken interaction in English with zero risk. Notice that the world did not end. Tomorrow, climb one stair higher.

## **Tool one: simple openers**

A conversation has to start somewhere, and the start is the scariest part. So let us remove the guessing. You do not need clever or original words to open a conversation—you need easy, friendly, ready-to-use phrases that you have already practiced. Keep a few in your pocket so your mouth knows them before your brain panics.

The five rules and your chunks help you here. You do not build these sentences word by word in the moment. You grab a whole chunk you already own and let it out. Here are openers and starters you can use straight away.

Situation	Ready-to-use phrase
Ordering	"Hi! Can I get a coffee, please?"
Ordering (unsure)	"What would you recommend?"
Greeting a stranger	"Hi there, how's it going?"
Small talk in a queue	"Busy today, isn't it?"
Offering help	"Hi, do you need any help?"
Starting with a friend	"Hey, how have you been?"
Online / voice note	"Hi! I just wanted to say hello and practice a little English."
Breaking the ice	"So, what do you do?"
Showing you are new	"I'm still learning English, so please be patient with me!"

That last one is a quiet superpower. When you tell someone you are learning, almost everyone becomes warmer, slower, and more helpful. Far from being weak, it is smart. It turns the other person into your ally.

## Tool two: keep it going by asking back

Here is the fear that stops people most: "What if they answer me, and then I don't know what to say?" The silence after their reply feels like a cliff. But there is one simple move that fixes ninety percent of these moments.

### **Ask a question back.**

A conversation is a ball. Someone throws it to you; you catch it and throw it back. You throw it back by asking a question. This does two beautiful things: it takes the pressure off you (now *they* talk), and it shows that you are interested. People love to be asked about themselves.

The easiest tool of all is "What about you?" Someone asks, "How are you?" You answer, "I'm good, thanks—what about you?" Done. The ball is

back in their hands and the conversation breathes. Here are more questions you can throw back.

To keep it going	Question you throw back
The universal return	"What about you?" / "And you?"
After they share news	"Oh, how did it go?"
To learn more	"Really? Tell me more."
About their day	"How was your day?"
About their work or study	"How long have you been doing that?"
About a place	"What's it like there?"
About their opinion	"What do you think?"
When you want detail	"What happened next?"

Memorize three of these. Just three. When the silence comes, reach for one and throw the ball back. You will be amazed how far three small questions can carry a whole conversation.

### Tool three: active listening sounds

You do not have to speak in full sentences the whole time to be a good conversation partner. In fact, good listeners say very little—but they make small sounds and short reactions that tell the speaker, "I'm with you, keep going." These little noises are some of the most useful English you will ever learn, because they are short, easy, and they buy you thinking time.

Sprinkle these into the conversation while the other person is talking:

- "Oh really?"
- "That's interesting!"
- "Wow."
- "No way!"

- "I see."
- "That makes sense."
- "Right, right."
- "Mm-hmm."
- "That sounds great."
- "Oh no, I'm sorry to hear that."

These tiny reactions do a lot of heavy lifting. They keep the other person talking, which means less pressure on you. They show warmth. And—this is the clever part—while you say "Oh really? That's interesting," your brain gets two seconds to prepare your next words. Active listening sounds are not just polite; they are a thinking tool.

## **Tool four: be curious, and you will be interesting**

Many learners worry, "My English is too simple. I won't be an interesting person to talk to." Let me free you from that worry forever. The most interesting people in any conversation are not the ones with the biggest vocabulary. They are the ones who are genuinely curious about *you*.

You do not need fancy words to be curious. You need attention and a few simple questions. When you listen closely and follow up with "Oh, why is that?" or "How did you feel about that?", the other person walks away thinking, "What a great conversation!" They will not remember your grammar mistakes. They will remember that you cared.

*“To be interesting, you do not need perfect English. You need honest curiosity. Ask, listen, and ask again.”*

So shift your goal. Instead of "I must speak impressively," try "I want to understand this person." That single change relaxes your shoulders, slows your speech, and—funny enough—makes your English flow better. When

you stop watching yourself and start watching them, the fear has nowhere to live.

## **It is fine to be slow. It is fine to make mistakes.**

Remember the core idea of this whole method: speed before perfection. In real conversation, this means you do not stop to fix every little error. You keep moving. If you say "She go to work yesterday," the other person understands you completely. They do not care. Let it go and keep talking.

And being slow is allowed too. You can pause. You can say, "Let me think for a second." You can ask, "Sorry, how do you say...?" Native speakers pause and search for words all the time. A slow, calm sentence is far better than a fast, panicked silence. Give yourself permission to take your time.

When you do not understand something, you have simple, friendly repair phrases ready:

- "Sorry, could you say that again?"
- "Could you speak a little slower, please?"
- "What does that mean?"
- "So you mean...?" (then repeat it your way)
- "How do you spell that?"

These phrases are not signs of failure. They are signs of a confident speaker who knows how to keep a conversation on track. Real communicators ask for help. Learn these by heart and you will never feel truly stuck.

## **Your plan for this week**

Knowledge without action stays in your head and helps no one. So here is your concrete plan. Do not do all of it today. Do one stair a day, and let each small win build the next.

1. **Today:** Talk to a voice assistant. Ask it three questions out loud.

2. **Tomorrow:** Send one short voice note to a friend in English. Re-record it if you want—then send.
3. **Day three:** Order something in English. A coffee, a snack, a bus ticket. Use one phrase from the openers table.
4. **Day four:** Help a stranger or make one small-talk comment. "Nice weather, isn't it?" Then smile and move on.
5. **Day five:** Have one short back-and-forth. Use one opener, throw back one question, and use two listening sounds. That is a full conversation.

After five days, look back. You will have spoken English with real people, in the real world, several times. The wall in your mind—the one between "talking alone" and "talking to humans"—will have a door in it now. And once you have walked through a door, you can never quite believe it scared you so much.

You have done the hard, lonely work of practicing alone. You are more ready than you feel. Take the first small stair today. The human on the other side is friendlier than your fear told you. Go and connect.

### **REMEMBER THIS**

- The gap between talking alone and talking to people feels huge but is actually small. Step across it gently.
- Nervousness is normal—it means you care. The other person is not your judge; they just want to connect.
- Climb the staircase: voice assistant, voice note, ordering, helping a stranger, small talk, then real conversation. Start low.
- Keep conversations alive by throwing the ball back: "What about you?" and a few simple questions.
- Use active listening sounds ("Oh really?", "That's interesting") to stay warm and buy thinking time.
- Curiosity makes you interesting—not big words. Ask, listen, and ask again.
- Your goal is connection and practice, not perfection. Being slow is fine. Mistakes are fine. Keep going.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# When Your Mind Goes Blank

*The words vanish, your face goes hot—here's exactly what to say to save yourself.*

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**I**t happens like this. You are speaking English, things are going well, and then—suddenly—nothing. The word you need is gone. Your brain feels empty. Your heart starts to beat faster, your face goes hot, and the silence grows louder and louder. The other person is waiting. You want to disappear.

Take a breath. This moment—the blank mind, the lost word, the panic—is the most normal thing in the world. It is not a sign that you are bad at English. It is a sign that you are a human being using a second language under pressure. And here is the good news: there is an exact set of words you can say to rescue yourself every single time. This chapter gives you those words. Memorize them, practice them out loud, and the next time your mind goes blank, your mouth will know what to do even when your brain does not.

## This Happens to Everyone

Let me tell you a secret. Native speakers freeze too. They forget names. They lose words in the middle of a sentence. They say "um, what's that thing called..." all the time. Advanced English speakers, professional presenters, even people on television—they all blank out. The difference is not that they never freeze. The difference is what they do in that one second after they freeze.

A beginner freezes and stops. The silence stretches. Panic takes over. They apologize, look down, and the conversation dies. A skilled speaker freezes and keeps the sound going. They say a little phrase to fill the gap, they buy a few seconds, and they find another way around the problem.

That is the whole trick. You are not learning to never blank out. You are learning to stay in motion when you do.

*“You are not learning to never blank out.  
You are learning to keep speaking when  
you do.”*

Remember the core idea of this whole method: avoid long pauses, keep flowing, be understood—not perfect. The blank moment is exactly where this matters most. A short pause is invisible. A long, silent, panicked pause is what makes both you and the listener uncomfortable. Your job is to turn the long silence into a short one by putting words in the gap.

## The Four Rescue Tools

When your mind goes blank, one of four things has usually happened. You will use a different tool for each one:

1. **You need a moment to think.** → Buy time.
2. **You forgot a specific word.** → Describe it or go around it.
3. **You didn't understand the other person.** → Ask them to help.
4. **You started to panic.** → Keep the sound going and recover.

Let's take each one and give you the exact phrases.

### Tool 1: Buy Time

Sometimes you don't need a word—you just need a second or two to organize your thoughts. The mistake is to take that second in total silence. Instead, fill it with a phrase. These phrases sound natural, give you thinking time, and tell the listener "I'm still here, just wait a moment." Say them slowly. They are doing real work for you.

Notice that these are also chunks—ready-made blocks of language you say as one piece, without building them word by word. That is why they come out fast even when the rest of your English feels slow.

## Tool 2: When You Forget a Word

This is the most common freeze of all. You know exactly what you mean, but the English word is hiding. Do not stop and search your memory in silence for ten seconds. Instead, do one of three things:

**Describe it.** Tell the person what it does, what it looks like, or where you find it. "It's a thing you use to open bottles." "It's like a small bag, but harder." If they know the word, they will often just say it for you—and now you've learned it in the most memorable way possible.

**Use a simpler word.** You don't need the perfect word. You need a word that works. Forgot "exhausted"? Say "very tired." Forgot "purchase"? Say "buy." Forgot "enormous"? Say "very big." Simple words are not worse. They are clear, and clear is the goal.

**Just ask.** There is no shame in this—it actually makes you sound confident and natural. "What's the word for...?" or "How do you say... in English?" Real speakers ask this all the time.

### TRY THIS NOW

Look around the room you are in right now. Pick five objects. Out loud, describe each one without saying its name, starting with "It's a thing you use to..." or "It's like a...". For example, for a pen: "It's a thing you use to write." Do all five. This is the exact skill that saves you when a word disappears—and practicing it now means it will be ready later, under pressure.

## Tool 3: When You Don't Understand

Sometimes the blank moment is not your fault at all. The other person spoke too fast, used a word you don't know, or mumbled. Many learners

freeze here and just nod, pretending to understand—and then the conversation gets worse. Don't pretend. Ask. Asking for help is a normal, polite, intelligent thing to do, and English has friendly phrases built for exactly this.

If you didn't catch the words, ask them to repeat. If they spoke too fast, ask them to slow down. If one word confused you, ask about that specific word. Each situation has its own phrase, and they are all in the table below.

## Tool 4: Keep Flowing Instead of Freezing

Here are three small habits that keep your speech moving when you feel the panic starting.

**Use fillers.** Words like "well...", "you know...", "actually...", "I mean...", and "so..." are not mistakes. Native speakers use them constantly. They fill the gap with sound so the silence never becomes scary. Sprinkle them in.

**Repeat the question.** If someone asks you something and your mind goes blank, simply repeat part of their question back. "Why did I choose this job? Well..." This gives you a few seconds of thinking time and starts your sentence for you. It works almost every time.

**Start with a chunk.** Begin your answer with a ready-made opening phrase—"To be honest...", "The thing is...", "What I think is...". By the time you finish the chunk, your brain has caught up and the rest of the sentence is waiting.

## Your Survival Phrase Bank

Here is your toolkit. These are the phrases to memorize. Don't just read them—say each one out loud right now. The goal is to make them so automatic that they come out by themselves the moment you need them.

Situation	Say this
<b>Buying time</b>	"Let me think for a second..."
	"That's a good question..."
	"How can I say this..."
	"Well, it depends..."
<b>Forgot a word</b>	"It's a thing you use to..."
	"It's like a... but..."
	"What's the word for...?"
	"How do you say... in English?"
<b>Didn't understand</b>	"Sorry, could you say that again?"
	"What do you mean by...?"
	"Could you speak a little slower, please?"
	"Sorry, I didn't catch that."
<b>Filling the gap</b>	"Well... you know..."
	"Actually... I mean..."
	"So... the thing is..."
<b>Recovering</b>	"Anyway, what I'm trying to say is..."
	"Let me start again."
	"Where was I? Oh yes..."

## Recover Gracefully – Then Keep Going

After a freeze, there is one more trap to avoid: apologizing too much. Many learners say "sorry, sorry, my English is bad, sorry" over and over. This actually draws more attention to the problem and makes the listener uncomfortable too. One small "sorry" is plenty. Then move on.

The graceful move is to acknowledge the bump in one second and steer straight back into your message. "Anyway, what I'm trying to say is..." or simply "Where was I? Oh yes..." Then you continue as if nothing happened. The listener almost always forgets the pause completely. They only remember it if you keep pointing at it.

*“One small "sorry" is enough. Apologizing again and again only makes the pause bigger than it really was.”*

Think about how forgiving listeners actually are. When someone speaks to you in your own language and forgets a word, you don't judge them—you wait, or you help. People do the same for you. The panic in your head is almost always much bigger than the moment looks from the outside.

## **Why You Must Practice Out Loud**

Here is the most important point in this chapter, so read it twice. These rescue phrases only work if they are automatic. In the moment of panic, your thinking brain is offline. You cannot calmly choose the right phrase from a list—there is no time, and no calm. The phrase has to come out by itself, like a reflex.

The only way to build that reflex is to say the phrases out loud, many times, when you are *not* under pressure. Read them aloud while you cook. Say them in the shower. Repeat the buying-time phrases until you could say them in your sleep. When you train them this way, they stop being something you remember and become something you simply do. That is the difference between knowing the phrase and being saved by it.

### TRY THIS NOW

Choose three phrases from the table—one for buying time, one for forgetting a word, one for not understanding. Say each one out loud ten times in a row. Then put your phone on a translation or recording app and answer one hard question ("What did you do last weekend?"), and force yourself to use at least one of the three phrases somewhere in your answer. Do this once a day for a week. Soon they will appear on their own.

From now on, the blank moment is not your enemy. It is just a signal—a signal to reach for one of your tools. Buy time. Describe the word. Ask for help. Keep the sound going. You have a phrase for every version of the panic, and the more you practice, the smaller the panic gets. One day you will freeze, reach for a phrase without thinking, and glide right past it. That day, you will know you have truly started to speak English.

### REMEMBER THIS

- Freezing is normal—everyone does it, including native and advanced speakers. The skill is not avoiding it but staying in motion when it happens.
- Turn long silences into short ones by filling the gap with a phrase. "Let me think...", "That's a good question...", "Well...".
- Forgot a word? Describe it ("it's a thing you use to..."), use a simpler word, or just ask "What's the word for...?"
- Didn't understand? Don't pretend. Ask: "Sorry, could you say that again?", "What do you mean by...?", "Could you speak a little slower?"
- Recover with one quick "sorry" at most, then steer back: "Anyway, what I'm trying to say is..." Don't apologize on repeat.
- Practice these phrases out loud until they are automatic. Under pressure you don't choose a phrase—it has to come out by reflex.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

# Finding People to Talk To

*You can't become a swimmer in an empty pool forever. Here's how to find the water—wherever you live.*

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**B**y now you have done a lot of work on your own. You have practiced with the methods in Parts II and III. You have spoken to yourself, recorded yourself, shadowed audio, and built sentences out loud. That solo work is the engine of your progress, and you should never stop doing it. But there is one thing solo practice cannot give you: a real, living human who talks back, who surprises you, who does not follow your script.

Real conversation is unpredictable. The other person changes the subject. They use a word you have never heard. They laugh at the wrong moment, or they do not understand you and you have to say it again in a different way. This is exactly the pressure you need. It is the difference between practicing in an empty pool and swimming in open water. The good news is that you do not need to move to London or New York. You do not even need to leave your room. The water is closer than you think—and in this chapter, I will show you how to find it.

## **The big idea: combine solo reps with real conversation**

Let me say the most important thing first, before we talk about any app or website. Speaking fluency comes from two things working together: lots of solo repetition (the drills, shadowing, and self-talk from earlier in this book) and regular real conversation with other people. One without the other is slow. Solo practice alone makes you good at talking to yourself. Conversation alone, with no preparation, often feels stressful and you repeat the same mistakes. Put them together and they multiply each other.

Think of it like this. Your solo practice loads the words and patterns into your mouth. Your real conversations pull those words out under pressure and lock them in. After a hard conversation, you go back to solo practice to fix what broke. After good solo practice, your next conversation feels easier. This loop is the whole game. Everything in this chapter is about building the second half of that loop—finding the humans.

*“Solo practice loads the words into your mouth. Real conversation pulls them out under pressure—and locks them in.”*

## **Your options, from cheapest to most personal**

There is no single best way to find speaking practice. The best way is the one you will actually use this week. Most learners end up using two or three of these together. Let me walk you through the full range, honestly—the good and the not-so-good of each.

### **1. Language-exchange partners**

This is the classic trade. You find someone who is learning your language and who speaks English well. You spend half your time speaking English (they help you) and half speaking your language (you help them). Apps and websites like Tandem, HelloTalk, and Speaky exist exactly for this. It is free or very cheap, and you meet real people from around the world.

The honest downside: partners can be flaky. People disappear, chats fizzle out, and some users treat these apps like dating apps. You may need to message ten people to find two good, reliable partners. That is normal. Do not take it personally. When you find a good one, treasure them and set up a regular time.

### **2. Online tutors**

For surprisingly little money, you can get one-on-one practice with a tutor whose whole job is to talk with you and help you improve. Platforms like

italki, Preply, and Cambly connect you with thousands of tutors at many price levels. A "community tutor" or conversation partner is usually cheaper than a certified teacher, and for pure speaking practice, that is often all you need.

This is the most reliable option of all. The tutor shows up. They are patient. They are paid to listen to you struggle and to gently correct you. If you can spare even a small budget, one tutor session a week is one of the best investments you can make. The only real downside is the cost—but with community tutors, it is lower than most people expect.

### **3. Conversation clubs and meetups**

All over the world, and all over the internet, there are groups that meet just to speak English together. Search Meetup.com for "English conversation" in your city. Look on Facebook and Eventbrite. Many libraries, universities, and language cafes run free conversation hours. Online, there are countless free or low-cost group calls where learners gather to chat around a topic.

The benefit of a group is that you can listen and warm up before you speak, which is gentler than one-on-one. The downside is that in a big group, quiet people sometimes hide and say almost nothing. If you join a club, make a private rule: I will say at least three things every session. Even a small group beats no group.

### **4. Online communities (Discord, gaming, hobby groups)**

This is my favorite hidden trick. You do not have to join a group *about learning English*. You can join a group about something you already love—and the group just happens to speak English. Discord servers exist for every hobby on earth: gaming, drawing, chess, cooking, music, coding, anime, fitness. Many have voice channels where people talk for hours.

When you talk about something you genuinely care about, you forget to be nervous. You are not "practicing English," you are arguing about which character is best or asking how to fix your code. The language becomes a

tool, not the goal—which is exactly the right mindset. The catch is that these spaces are full of slang and fast speech, so they suit higher-intermediate learners better. But the motivation they give you is hard to beat.

## 5. AI voice tutors and chatbots

Here is an option that did not exist a few years ago and has changed practice forever. You can now talk out loud to an AI voice tutor any time of day or night. It never gets tired, never judges you, never sighs when you make a mistake, and is available at 3 a.m. when no human is awake. You can ask it to slow down, to repeat, to correct every error or none, to role-play a job interview or a coffee order. This is what my own company, Enversion AI, builds—tools to give learners these low-pressure reps on demand.

Let me be very clear and very honest about this, because it matters. AI practice is a fantastic *complement*. It is perfect for building confidence, for warming up before a real call, for getting hundreds of repetitions, and for trying things you would feel shy doing with a person. But it is not a replacement for real humans. A machine will never make you feel the warm rush of a real connection, never be confused in the messy human way that teaches you the most, never become your friend. Use AI to remove your fear and build your reps—then take that confidence to real people. The AI is the practice court. The humans are the real match.

## 6. Everyday opportunities you already have

Finally, do not overlook the English that is already around you, even in a non-English country. Tourists need directions. Your workplace may have international clients or English meetings you could volunteer for. You can switch a customer service call to English. You can order food, ask for help in a hotel, or chat with a foreign visitor in a museum. These moments are short and real and they cost nothing. Train yourself to say yes to them instead of avoiding them. Every small real exchange is a rep that counts.

## A side-by-side comparison

Here is the same information in one place, so you can choose what fits your budget, your level, and your courage today.

Option	Typical cost	Best for level	Main pros
Language-exchange partners	Free / very low	Any level	Real people, cultural trade, free; you help them too
Online tutors	Low–medium per hour	Any level	Most reliable, patient, gentle correction, structured
Conversation clubs / meetups	Often free	Beginner–intermediate	Warm up by listening, community, low one-on-one pressure
Online communities (Discord, gaming, hobbies)	Free	Intermediate–advanced	Real interest = no nerves, hours of natural talk
AI voice tutors & chatbots	Free–low	Any level	24/7, zero judgment, unlimited reps, confidence builder
Everyday opportunities	Free	Any level	Real stakes, already around you, builds courage fast

## How to actually start (and not chicken out)

Here is the truth: the hardest part is not finding people. It is sending the first message and showing up the first time. Your brain will invent a hundred reasons to wait until you are "more ready." You will never feel ready. Ready comes *after* you start, not before. So let us make starting as easy as possible by removing the thinking. Use a script.

A first message does not need to be clever. It needs to be sent. Here are three you can copy, change the details, and send today:

1. **To an exchange partner:** "Hi! I see you're learning [my language] and I'm working on my English. Want to help each other? We could do 15 minutes in English and 15 in [my language]. I'm free most evenings—what works for you?"
2. **To a tutor (booking):** "Hi, I'm an intermediate learner and my main goal is speaking confidence, not grammar drills. I'd like to just talk and have you correct my biggest mistakes. Can we try a trial lesson?"
3. **To a hobby community:** "Hey everyone, I'm new here. I love [the hobby] and I'm also practicing my English—hope it's okay if I'm a bit slow sometimes. Is the voice channel open later today?"

Notice that each script tells the other person what you want and lowers the pressure on yourself by admitting you are learning. People are kind about this far more often than you fear. Almost nobody mocks a learner who is clearly trying. The ones who would are not worth your time anyway.

#### TRY THIS NOW

Right now, before you close this book, do one thing. Pick the single option above that scares you least. Open the app or website. Send exactly one first message using a script—or, if you chose an AI tutor, start one five-minute voice chat. Just one. You are not committing to anything more. You are only proving to yourself that the first step is small and survivable. The second step is always easier than the first.

## Turn one chat into a weekly habit

A single conversation is nice. A *regular* conversation is what changes you. The learners who improve fastest are not the ones who talk the most in one heroic week and then vanish. They are the ones who have a fixed slot—say, every Tuesday at 7 p.m.—that happens whether they feel like it or not.

Routine beats motivation, because motivation comes and goes but a calendar appointment stays.

When you find a good partner or tutor, set up a repeating time immediately. Put it in your calendar. Treat it like an appointment you cannot cancel, the same way you would not skip a work meeting. Aim for at least once a week; twice or three times is better. Keep each session short enough that you actually look forward to it—even twenty or thirty minutes is plenty. A short session you keep beats a long one you dread and skip.

To make sessions smooth, prepare a little. Have two or three topics ready so you never sit in awkward silence: something from your week, a question to ask them, an opinion you can defend. This small preparation connects right back to your solo practice. Rehearse your topics out loud before the call. You will sound more fluent, feel more confident, and get more out of every minute.

## **How to be a good partner (so people come back)**

Finding people is half the job. Keeping them is the other half. If you want partners who are happy to talk with you again and again, be the kind of person you would want to talk to. This is not complicated, but most learners forget it because they are so focused on their own practice.

1. **Show up on time and reliably.** Nothing kills a partnership faster than cancelling at the last minute or going silent for two weeks. Reliability is rare, and it makes people loyal to you.
2. **Give as much as you take.** In an exchange, truly help with their language too. Listen well. Ask about their life. A conversation is not a one-way lesson—it is a relationship.
3. **Be genuinely curious.** Ask follow-up questions. "Why do you think that?" "What happened next?" People love to talk about themselves, and your job becomes easy when they do most of the talking.
4. **Be kind about mistakes—theirs and yours.** Do not over-correct your partner unless they ask. And laugh off your own slips instead of

apologizing ten times. A relaxed partner is a fun partner.

5. **Say thank you.** A short message after a good session—"That was really fun, see you next week!"—costs nothing and makes people want to keep going.

Be this person, and you will not have to hunt for partners forever. The good ones will want to keep talking to you, and they may even introduce you to others. Generosity is the best networking there is.

## **When fear shows up (because it will)**

Even with the best scripts and the friendliest partners, your heart will pound before that first call. Let me tell you something I have seen in thousands of students: the fear before is always bigger than the discomfort during. You imagine a disaster. What actually happens is two humans being a little awkward and then warming up. Five minutes in, you forget to be scared because you are busy communicating.

If the fear feels too big to face a person directly, this is exactly where AI practice earns its place. Spend a week talking only to an AI voice tutor. Let it take the edge off. Make all your embarrassing mistakes where no human can see. Then, with that lower fear, send the first message to a real person. There is no shame in using training wheels to learn to ride. Just remember the goal is to ride out onto the real road eventually—the humans are where the real growth lives.

And if a conversation goes badly? Good. That means you found a gap in your speaking that solo practice had hidden from you. Write down what tripped you up. Take it back to your drills. Fix it. Then go again. Every "bad" conversation is data, not failure. The only true failure is staying in the empty pool because the water looks cold.

### **REMEMBER THIS**

- Solo practice loads the words; real conversation locks them in. You need both, in a regular loop.
- You do not need to live in an English country. Partners, tutors, clubs, communities, and AI are all reachable from your room.
- Online tutors are the most reliable paid option; language exchange and hobby communities are the best free ones.
- AI voice tutors are a great complement—perfect for reps and confidence—but never a replacement for real humans.
- The hardest step is the first message. Use a script, send just one today, and stop overthinking.
- Routine beats motivation: book a fixed weekly time and protect it like a real appointment.
- Be a good partner—reliable, curious, generous—and people will want to talk with you again.
- Fear before is always bigger than discomfort during. A "bad" conversation is data, not failure.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

# Your 90-Day Climb from A2 to B2

*What real progress looks like, month by month—so you know you're on the right path.*

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**B**y now you have all the tools. You know how to practice alone, how to think in chunks instead of single words, how to stop translating in your head, how to keep talking when a word goes missing. What you do not have yet is a map—a clear picture of how these tools fit together over time, and what you should honestly expect to feel at week four, week eight, week twelve. This chapter is that map. It closes Part IV by turning everything you have learned into one simple, day-by-day climb.

Here is the promise, and I want to be careful and honest about it. In the method that trained more than 8,000 students, learners who practiced every day moved from A2 to B2 speaking in about four months. Their speaking speed rose from around 40–50 words per minute to over 90 in about two months. These are real numbers from real people. But they are not magic numbers, and they are not a guarantee. They are what consistency produces. Ninety days is a strong, realistic path to the edge of B2—not a contract. The single thing that decides your result is whether you show up most days. Everything else is detail.

So before we build the plan, let us agree on what we are climbing toward. You need to know what A2, B1, and B2 actually feel like in a conversation—not as exam labels, but as moments you will recognize when they happen to you.

## What the levels actually feel like

CEFR is just a ruler. A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2—six marks from beginner to advanced. Forget the official descriptions for a moment. Here is what each one feels like from the inside, in the middle of a real talk with a real person.

**A2 (elementary)—where most readers start.** You can survive. You can order food, ask for directions, say where you are from and what you do. But conversation feels like lifting heavy boxes. You build each sentence word by word, often translating from your own language first. There are long pauses. When someone speaks fast, you catch maybe half. You understand more than you can say, and that gap is frustrating. Speaking feels like effort, not flow.

**B1 (intermediate)—the bridge.** Something loosens. You can keep a conversation going on familiar topics—your job, your family, your weekend, a film you saw. You make mistakes, plenty of them, but they rarely stop you. You can explain a problem, give a simple opinion, tell a short story. You still hit walls on unfamiliar subjects, and you still pause to search for words, but you no longer freeze. B1 is the level where you start to feel like a speaker, not a student.

**B2 (upper-intermediate)—the goal.** Now you can actually talk. You can hold a real discussion, disagree politely, explain why you think something, handle a topic you did not prepare for. You speak at a natural pace—90 words a minute or more—without translating. Mistakes still happen, but they are small and they do not break the flow. A native speaker can talk to you normally and not slow down. At B2 you can use English for work, for travel, for friendship. This is the level where English stops being a subject and becomes a tool you own.

*“A2 is surviving. B1 is keeping the conversation alive. B2 is finally just talking. Ninety days of honest practice is the climb between them.”*

The jump from A2 to B2 sounds enormous, and in the old way of studying it was—twelve to twenty-four months of grammar drills, vocabulary lists, and silent reading. The reason this method moves faster is simple: you spend your time doing the one thing the old way avoided. You speak. From

day one. Out loud, every day. That is the whole secret, and the plan below is just a schedule for it.

## **The 90-day roadmap**

Three months, three phases. Each month has one main job. Do not try to do everything at once—that is how people burn out in week two. Each phase builds on the last. Month 1 builds the engine. Month 2 adds fuel and aim. Month 3 puts it on the road. Here is the full map.

**YOUR 90-DAY CLIMB FROM A2 TO B2 SPEAKING—FOCUS, DAILY WORK, AND MILESTONES TO CHECK OFF**

Phase	Main focus	Daily practice (20–30 min)	What you'll be able to do	Milestone to check off
<b>Month 1</b> <b>Days 1–30</b> <i>Build the engine</i>	Make the daily habit automatic. Kill translation. Get comfortable speaking alone, out loud, with no audience.	Start the Stopwatch every session. Speak alone for 5–10 minutes on one simple topic. Describe what you see. Repeat aloud after audio (shadowing).	Talk to yourself for several minutes without freezing. Build sentences with less and less translating. Speed begins to climb past 50 wpm.	<input type="checkbox"/> 21 days of practice done <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke alone 5 min, no stopping <input type="checkbox"/> Caught myself <i>not</i> translating
<b>Month 2</b> <b>Days 31–60</b> <i>Add fuel and aim</i>	Grow vocabulary as chunks, not single words. Sharpen your sounds and the five pronunciation rules. Start your first real conversations.	Learn 3–5 chunks a day and use each in a spoken sentence. Drill one sound or rule. Have 2–3 short live conversations a week.	Reach for whole phrases automatically. Be understood more easily. Keep a real conversation going on familiar topics. Speed hits ~90 wpm.	<input type="checkbox"/> 60+ chunks in active use <input type="checkbox"/> Had my first real conversation <input type="checkbox"/> Hit 90 wpm on a topic I know
<b>Month 3</b> <b>Days 61–90</b> <i>Hit the road</i>	Make real conversations a routine. Handle blanks smoothly. Push into B2 range and widen your topics.	Talk with a real person 3–4 times a week. Practice repair phrases for when words vanish. Speak on new, unprepared topics each week.	Discuss, disagree, explain, and tell stories at a natural pace. Recover from missing words without freezing. Handle topics you did not prepare.	<input type="checkbox"/> 12+ real conversations this month <input type="checkbox"/> Survived an unprepared topic <input type="checkbox"/> Recovered from a

Phase	Main focus	Daily practice (20–30 min)	What you'll be able to do	Milestone to check off
				blank, kept talking

Now let us walk through each phase, so you know exactly what to do and what to expect.

## Month 1 — Build the engine

The first month is not about sounding good. It is about building a habit and breaking a bad one. The habit is daily speaking. The bad one is translating in your head. If you fix only these two things in thirty days, you have already won—everything in months two and three will be easier.

Your enemy this month is not grammar. It is the silent gap between "I want to practice" and actually opening your mouth. So make it tiny and unavoidable:

1. **Pick a fixed time and a fixed place.** Same chair, same minutes, every day. Right after coffee, or right before bed. The brain loves routine; do not make yourself decide each day.
2. **Start the Stopwatch.** Every session, time yourself speaking on one topic. Watching the seconds add up turns practice into a game you can win.
3. **Speak alone, out loud.** Describe your room. Narrate your morning. Tell the empty room about your weekend. No audience, no judgment—just your voice moving.
4. **Catch the translation.** When you notice yourself building a sentence in your language first, stop and start again with simpler words you already own in English. Smaller sentences, but English from the start.
5. **Shadow audio.** Play short clips and repeat aloud at the same time, copying the rhythm. This trains your mouth and ear together.

What to expect by day thirty: speaking alone will feel almost normal. You will still pause, still make mistakes, but the freeze will be melting. Your speed—if you measure it—will already be lifting off that 40–50 floor. Most importantly, the habit will be set. That is the engine. Now we add fuel.

### TRY THIS NOW

Set a timer for two minutes and describe—out loud, right now—everything you did since you woke up this morning. Do not stop, do not look anything up, do not switch to your own language. When a word is missing, talk around it with simpler words and keep going. When the timer ends, note roughly how many words you spoke. That number is your starting line. In sixty days, do this exact exercise again—you will not believe the difference.

## Month 2 — Add fuel and aim

In month two, you have the engine running. Now you give it two things: more language to say (fuel) and clearer sound (aim). And you take the biggest step of all—you start talking to real people.

**Fuel: learn chunks, not words.** Stop collecting single words on a list. Collect phrases the way native speakers actually use them—"do you mind if," "I was thinking about," "the thing is," "it depends on." Learn three to five of these a day, and the rule is simple: you must say each one out loud in your own sentence the same day. A chunk you only read is forgotten. A chunk you speak becomes yours. These phrases come out as whole blocks, which is exactly why your speed jumps—you stop building sentences brick by brick.

**Aim: sharpen your sound.** Spend a few minutes a day on the five pronunciation rules from earlier in the book and on the specific sounds your language struggles with. You do not need a perfect accent—you need to be easily understood. Clear sound removes the pauses where listeners stop you to ask "sorry, what?" and that alone makes you feel more fluent.

**The big step: your first real conversations.** This is where many learners hesitate, and I understand why—it is scary. Do it anyway, small. Two or three short conversations a week with a language partner, a tutor, an app, anyone. Five or ten minutes is enough at first. You will make mistakes. The person will understand you anyway. That single discovery—"they understood me"—changes everything.

What to expect by day sixty: this is where the famous number lands. Around the end of month two, with daily practice, speaking speed typically reaches 90-plus words per minute on familiar topics. You will feel phrases arriving on their own. Conversations on things you know—your work, your life, your interests—will flow. You are standing at B1 and looking up at B2.

## Month 3 — Hit the road

The final month is about making fluency normal. You stop practicing for conversations and start having them as a routine part of your week. The goal of month three is to push from comfortable-on-familiar-topics into genuine B2—able to handle almost anything that comes up.

Three things to push on now:

1. **Make real conversations regular.** Aim for three or four a week, longer each time—fifteen, twenty, thirty minutes. Variety matters: different people, different accents, different moods. Every conversation is a rep.
2. **Handle the blanks.** You will still lose words—everyone does, in every language. The B2 skill is not avoiding blanks; it is gliding over them. Practice your repair phrases: "what's the word," "you know, the thing that," "let me put it another way." Keep the flow alive while your brain catches up.
3. **Widen your topics.** Each week, talk about something you did not prepare—news, an idea, a problem, an opinion. Unprepared topics are where B2 lives. The first time you hold your own on a surprise subject, you will feel the level click into place.

What to expect by day ninety: you will discuss, explain, disagree, and tell stories at a natural pace, without translating, recovering smoothly when a word slips away. That is B2. Maybe you will be solidly inside it; maybe you will be standing right at its door. Either way, you will be a different speaker than the person who timed those two nervous minutes on day one.

## **When it feels slow—and it will**

Let me be honest about the hard parts, because they are normal and they fool people into quitting. Progress is not a straight line. You will have a brilliant week followed by a week where you feel worse than before. That dip is not failure—it is your brain reorganizing what it learned. Push through it; the next jump usually comes right after.

There are also plateaus, flat stretches where nothing seems to improve for days. Do not change the whole plan in a panic. Usually the fix is small: more real conversation, fewer silent exercises. Speaking is the input that breaks plateaus.

And remember the honest part of the promise. Ninety days is a strong path, not a law of nature. Miss most of your days and the climb simply takes longer—the method still works, your timeline just stretches. The students who hit four months hit it because they practiced almost every day. Consistency is not one of the factors. It is the factor. Twenty steady minutes beats a heroic three-hour session once a week, every single time.

*“You do not need more talent or more time. You need to show up tomorrow, and the day after that. The climb is built from ordinary days you almost skipped.”*

So that is your map. Print the table, stick it where you will see it, and check off the milestones as you pass them. Part IV is finished, but your climb is just starting. You have the method, the schedule, and a realistic pic-

ture of the road. The only thing left is the part no book can do for you—opening your mouth tomorrow morning and starting the clock.

### **REMEMBER THIS**

- The levels in plain words: A2 is surviving, B1 is keeping the conversation alive, B2 is finally just talking at a natural pace without translating.
- The real result from this method: A2 to B2 in about four months with daily practice, and speed from 40–50 to 90-plus words per minute in about two months—a strong path, not a guarantee.
- Month 1: build the daily habit, start the Stopwatch, kill translation, get comfortable speaking alone. The engine.
- Month 2: learn chunks not words, sharpen your sound and the five rules, and start your first real conversations—speed reaches ~90 wpm.
- Month 3: make real conversations routine, handle blanks with repair phrases, and push into B2 with unprepared topics.
- Dips and plateaus are normal; the fix is almost always more real speaking, not less.
- Consistency decides everything. Twenty steady minutes a day beats one long session a week. Show up, and the climb takes care of itself.

PART FIVE

# Keep the Fire Burning

*The hardest part isn't starting—it's not stopping.  
How to build a habit, beat the plateau, and keep  
climbing.*

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

# Make It a Daily Habit

*Motivation gets you started. Habit is what actually gets you fluent.*

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**L**et's start with the truth that most language courses will never tell you. The method in this book works. You have seen it work in the earlier chapters. But it only works if you keep doing it. A brilliant method that you practice for three days and then drop will lose every time to an ordinary method that you practice every day for three months. Consistency is the real secret. Not talent. Not a special accent. Not a perfect course. Just showing up, again and again, even when you don't feel like it.

Here is the problem. On the day you bought this book, you probably felt excited. You imagined yourself speaking English with confidence. That feeling is wonderful, but it is also temporary. Motivation is like weather. Some days it is sunny and you feel ready to practice for an hour. Other days it rains and you don't want to do anything. If your practice depends on the weather, you will practice only on the sunny days, and there are not enough sunny days to make you fluent.

So we are going to do something smarter. Instead of relying on how you feel, you are going to build a system. A habit. Something so automatic and so easy that you do it without needing to feel motivated at all, the same way you brush your teeth without giving yourself a motivational speech first. This chapter shows you exactly how.

*“You will not always feel motivated. That is fine. Habits don't need motivation. That is the whole point of building one.”*

## Why Habits Beat Motivation Every Time

Think about the things you already do every single day without deciding to. You wake up and check your phone. You make coffee. You put on your shoes before you leave the house. You did not wake up this morning and think, "Do I feel motivated to put on my shoes today?" You just did it. It is automatic. It costs you almost no mental energy.

That is the power of a habit. Once a behavior becomes automatic, it survives bad moods, busy days, tiredness, and stress. Motivation cannot do that. Motivation is expensive — it burns energy and it runs out. A habit is cheap. It runs almost by itself.

Your goal in this chapter is to move English speaking practice out of the "things I have to decide to do" box and into the "things I just do" box. When you reach that point, fluency becomes almost unavoidable, because every day adds another small deposit to your account.

## The Five Rules of a Habit That Sticks

There is a simple science to building a habit that lasts. You do not need to be a psychologist to use it. You just need five rules. Follow them and your daily practice will become as natural as that morning coffee.

- 1. Attach it to something you already do.** This is called habit stacking. Instead of trying to find a free moment somewhere in your day, you glue the new habit onto an old one. The formula is: "After I [existing habit], I will [new habit]." For example: "After I pour my morning coffee, I do one speaking sprint." The old habit becomes the alarm clock for the new one. You already drink coffee every day, so now you also practice every day.
- 2. Make it tiny.** The biggest mistake learners make is starting too big. They promise themselves one hour a day, do it twice, feel exhausted, and quit. Instead, set a minimum so small that it feels almost silly to skip. Your minimum is sixty seconds. One single minute of speaking out loud. On a great day you will do far more. But on a terrible day, sixty seconds still counts, and the streak survives.

3. **Keep it visible.** What you can see, you remember. What you can measure, you keep doing. You need a tracker — a calendar, a notebook page, an app, anything — where you mark each day you practice. Seeing the chain of marks grow is strangely powerful. After a week, you will not want to break it.
4. **Remove the friction.** Every small obstacle between you and practice is an excuse waiting to happen. Decide in advance what you will talk about and how long your timer will run, so that when the moment comes, there is nothing to think about. Have your topic ready. Have your timer ready. The less you have to decide, the more likely you are to start.
5. **Never miss twice in a row.** You will miss days. Everyone does. Life happens. The rule is not "never miss." The rule is "never miss twice." Missing one day is an accident. Missing two days is the start of a new habit — the habit of not practicing. Protect the chain. If you skip today, you practice tomorrow no matter what.

#### TRY THIS NOW

Write down one sentence using this exact formula: "After I \_\_\_\_\_, I will do one English speaking sprint." Fill the first blank with something you already do every single day without fail — your morning coffee, brushing your teeth, sitting down at your desk, finishing lunch. Say the full sentence out loud once. You have just designed your trigger. This single sentence is the foundation of your entire habit.

## Make It So Small You Cannot Fail

Let's talk more about the sixty-second minimum, because it is the rule that saves people. When you set a huge goal, your brain treats it like a threat. A part of you resists. You delay. You tell yourself you will do it later, and later never comes.

But sixty seconds? Your brain cannot find a good reason to resist sixty seconds. It is too small to be scary. And here is the magic: once you start, you almost always keep going. Starting is the hard part. The timer that says

"just one minute" gets you past the hard part. Nine times out of ten, that one minute turns into five or ten, simply because you are already speaking and it feels good.

On the days when one minute really is all you can manage, that is completely fine. You did not break the chain. You kept the habit alive. A tiny practice on a hard day is a thousand times better than a perfect practice that never happens. The learners who reach fluency are not the ones who practice hardest. They are the ones who never let the streak die.

*“A bad practice you actually did beats a perfect practice you skipped. Always.”*

## A Simple Daily Routine

You do not need a complicated plan. You need a routine you can repeat half asleep. Here is a ten-minute version that fits into almost any day. Notice that even the full routine is short. Ten minutes a day is the sweet spot — long enough to make real progress, short enough that you have no excuse.

Time	Step	What you do
0:00–1:00	Warm up	Say out loud what you did this morning. Don't think hard, just talk.
1:00–4:00	Speaking sprint	Speak nonstop about today's topic. No stopping to find perfect words.
4:00–6:00	Repeat and improve	Say the same thing again, a little better, a little smoother.
6:00–9:00	New challenge	Add a question, a story, or an opinion to stretch yourself.
9:00–10:00	Mark the tracker	Write down the date and how you felt. Watch the streak grow.

If you only have sixty seconds today, do the warm-up and stop. That still counts. The routine flexes with your day. On busy days it shrinks. On free days it grows. The one thing it never does is disappear.

## Track It So You Can See It Grow

There is a special kind of fuel that does not run out: watching your own numbers climb. When you keep a tracker, you turn an invisible effort into something you can see. Day 1 becomes day 7 becomes day 30 becomes day 90. Each number is proof that you are becoming the kind of person who speaks English every day.

Here is a simple weekly tracker you can copy into a notebook. Put a check mark when you do your minimum, and write your streak number so it stares back at you. The goal is not perfection. The goal is a long, unbroken chain.

Day	Did I speak? (min 60 sec)	Topic	Streak count
Monday	✓	My weekend	1
Tuesday	✓	My job	2
Wednesday	✓	A movie I like	3
Thursday	✓	My family	4
Friday	✓	My plans	5
Saturday	✓	A problem I solved	6
Sunday	✓	My week in review	7

When you finish a week, do not throw the page away. Keep it. Stack the weeks. After three months you will have a pile of pages, and that pile is the most convincing proof you could ever have that you are not the same speaker you used to be. On the days you feel like nothing is changing, you look at the climbing numbers, and the numbers tell the truth.

## How to Handle a Missed Day Without Guilt

Now the most important part, because this is where almost everyone quits. You will miss a day. I promise you. You will be sick, or traveling, or buried in work, or simply too tired. And when it happens, your mind will whisper a dangerous lie: "You broke the streak. You failed. You might as well stop."

Do not believe it. Missing one day means nothing. A single missed day has almost zero effect on your English. What hurts you is not the missed day — it is the guilt and the giving up that follow it. People do not fail because they miss once. They fail because they miss once, feel ashamed, and use that shame as a reason to quit completely.

So here is your plan for a missed day. Notice it without drama. Tell yourself, calmly, "Okay, I missed yesterday. Today I do my sixty seconds." Then do it. That is the whole recovery. No guilt, no punishment, no long speech about your weak willpower. Just return to the habit the very next day. Remember the rule: never miss twice. One missed day is a comma. Two missed days is the start of quitting.

### TRY THIS NOW

Make a "comeback plan" right now, before you ever need it. Finish this sentence and say it out loud: "If I miss a day, tomorrow I will do my sixty-second minimum at \_\_\_\_\_ (a specific time or after a specific habit), with no guilt." Deciding your recovery in advance means that when the slip happens, you already know exactly what to do. You will recover automatically instead of spiraling into quitting.

## Keep It From Getting Boring

A habit that bores you is a habit you will eventually drop. So part of keeping going is keeping it interesting. The good news is that English speaking practice gives you endless room to play.

Rotate your topics. If you talk about the same thing every day, your brain goes to sleep. One day talk about your work. The next day describe a childhood memory. The day after, give your opinion on something in the news, or describe your dream vacation, or explain how to cook your favorite meal. New topics force new words out of you and keep the practice fresh.

Change the challenge, too. One week, focus on speaking faster without long pauses. Another week, focus on telling complete stories with a beginning, middle, and end. Another week, practice disagreeing politely, or asking better questions. When the practice keeps changing shape, it never gets stale, and you keep discovering new corners of your ability.

1. Pick a "topic of the week" and explore it from different angles each day.
2. Use a deck of topic cards or a random list, and let chance choose for you.
3. Set a fresh micro-challenge each week: speed, storytelling, opinions, questions.
4. Record yourself once a week and listen back — hearing your own progress is its own reward.
5. Talk to a real person when you can, so the practice connects to real life.

*“Three months of ten minutes a day is  
ninety practice sessions. Ninety sessions  
will change the way you speak.  
Guaranteed.”*

## **The Promise of the Long Chain**

Let me give you a number to hold onto. Ten minutes a day, every day, for three months. That is all. It does not sound like much. But do the math: that is about fifteen hours of focused speaking practice, spread out in a way that your brain can actually absorb. Spread-out practice beats one big cram session every time, because your brain needs the gaps between sessions to lock in what you learned.

Over those three months, something quietly remarkable happens. The words you struggled to find start arriving faster. The sentences you built slowly start building themselves. The fear you felt before opening your mouth fades, because you have opened your mouth ninety times and survived every single time. You will not notice the change day to day. It is too gradual. But one day you will catch yourself speaking smoothly about something difficult, and you will realize you have become a different speaker.

That transformation is not waiting at the end of some heroic effort. It is hiding inside the boring, ordinary, repeated days. It is built ten minutes at a time by a person who simply refused to stop. That person can be you. You do not need more motivation. You need a small habit, a visible tracker, and the stubbornness to come back tomorrow even after a bad day.

Start today. Not next Monday, not next month — today. Do your sixty seconds right now if you can. Make the first mark on your tracker. Then come back tomorrow and do it again. Keep the chain alive, and let the chain carry you all the way to fluency.

### **REMEMBER THIS**

- Motivation gets you started, but habit is what makes you fluent. Build a system, not a mood.
- Stack your practice onto an existing routine: "After I [daily habit], I do one speaking sprint."
- Set a sixty-second minimum so small you can never honestly skip it. Starting is the hard part.
- Keep a visible tracker and watch the streak and the numbers climb — that is your fuel.
- Remove friction by deciding your topic and timer in advance.
- Never miss twice in a row. One missed day is nothing; quitting after it is everything.
- Handle missed days with zero guilt. Just return the next day.
- Rotate topics and change challenges so practice never gets boring.
- Ten minutes a day, every day, for three months changes everything. Start today.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

# Breaking Through the Plateau

*When the fast progress slows and you feel stuck—this is normal, and here's how to climb again.*

---

**T**here is a moment in almost every learner's journey that feels like hitting a wall. In your first months of speaking English, everything moved quickly. You learned new words every day. You felt yourself improving week by week. Conversations that once seemed impossible became easy. And then, one day, the progress slowed down. You opened your mouth and the same words came out. You made the same mistakes you made last month. You started to wonder: "Am I stuck? Have I stopped getting better?"

First, take a deep breath. What you are feeling is called a plateau, and it is one of the most normal experiences in language learning. It happens to nearly everyone, usually somewhere around the B1 to B2 level—the place where you can already say a lot, but you want to say more. The plateau is not a sign that you have failed. It is a sign that you have come a very long way. You have to climb high before you can reach a flat part of the mountain.

In this chapter, we are going to do two things. First, we will understand why the plateau happens—because once you understand it, it stops being scary. Second, we will look at clear, practical strategies to break through it and start climbing again. The plateau ends. I promise you that. But it only ends if you change something. Keep doing exactly what you are doing now, and you will stay flat. Push with intention, and you will move.

## Why the Early Days Felt So Fast

To understand the plateau, you first need to understand why the beginning was so fast. When you started, you knew almost nothing. That means almost everything you learned was new and useful right away. Learn the

word "because," and suddenly you can connect two ideas. Learn the past tense, and a whole new world of conversation opens. Every small thing you added had a huge effect on your ability to speak.

But now you already know "because." You already know the past tense. You can already handle everyday conversations, order food, talk about your day, describe your job, and tell a simple story. The easy, high-value gains are behind you. The improvements that are left are smaller and more hidden. They take more effort to find and more effort to build. This is why progress feels slower—not because you stopped learning, but because the cheap, fast wins are already in your pocket.

*“A plateau is not the end of progress. It is the moment your old methods stopped working—and your new ones haven’t started yet.”*

Think of it like physical fitness. When an unfit person starts exercising, they improve fast in the first month. But an athlete who is already strong has to train much harder for a much smaller gain. You are now the athlete of English. The good news is that athletes still get better—they just train differently. That is exactly what you are going to do.

## **Why Plateaus Really Happen**

The natural slowdown we just described explains part of the plateau. But most of the time, there is a second cause, and this one is in your control. The deeper reason you feel stuck is usually one of these four habits. Read them honestly and see which ones describe you.

1. **You stopped pushing past your comfort zone.** In the beginning, every conversation was a challenge. Now you can speak comfortably, so you stay comfortable. But comfort is where growth stops. If your brain is never struggling, it has no reason to build anything new.

2. **Your practice became repetitive.** You do the same kind of exercise, watch the same kind of video, have the same kind of chat. Repetition keeps your current level alive, but it does not raise it. You are exercising muscles you already have.
3. **You only speak about familiar topics.** You talk about your work, your family, your weekend—the same five or six subjects. You have mastered the vocabulary for those topics, so you never feel the gaps. The moment someone asks about politics, science, or your opinion on a big idea, you freeze. Those untouched topics are where your real growth is waiting.
4. **You stopped measuring.** Early on, your progress was so obvious you didn't need to track it. Now the changes are small and slow, so without measuring, they become invisible. And when you can't see progress, you lose motivation, and you push less—which makes the plateau even longer.

Notice the pattern in all four. The plateau is not caused by a lack of talent or time. It is caused by your practice becoming too easy and too familiar. The fix, then, is simple to say and powerful to do: make it harder again, on purpose.

## The Strategies to Break Through

Here are the concrete ways to climb again. You do not need all of them at once. Pick two or three that match your weak spots and commit to them for the next few weeks.

### 1. Deliberately Raise the Difficulty

This is the single most important move. Stop choosing the easy version of everything. If you usually talk about your day, talk instead about a hard question: Should children have phones? Is it better to live in a city or the countryside? What would you change about your country? These abstract and opinion-based topics force you to build arguments, not just report facts.

Try speaking in longer pieces too. Instead of one-minute answers, give yourself a topic and speak for three minutes without stopping. Debate a point even when you don't fully believe it. Explain a complicated idea from your job to an imaginary beginner. The discomfort you feel is the exact feeling of growth happening.

## 2. Add Constraints to Your Practice

A constraint is a rule that makes a task harder in a useful way. Constraints stop you from leaning on the same easy words and patterns. Here are a few to try:

1. Speak for three minutes on a topic, not one—and do not stop, even if you repeat yourself.
2. Banish filler words. No "um," no "you know," no "like." Silence is allowed; fillers are not.
3. Force yourself to use five new words or phrases you learned this week, all in one short talk.
4. Tell the same story three times, each time using completely different words.
5. Speak about a topic without using your three favorite "safe" words.

Constraints feel awkward, and that is the point. They block the easy road and push you onto a new one.

### TRY THIS NOW

Pick a topic you would normally avoid—something abstract like "What makes a person successful?" Set a timer for three minutes. Record yourself speaking the whole time without stopping and without a single filler word. It will feel hard and messy. That is the feeling of breaking the plateau. When the timer ends, listen back and write down two words you wished you had known. Look them up. You just made progress today.

## 3. Get Real Feedback

On a plateau, your worst enemy is the mistake you can't hear. You have been making the same errors for so long that they sound correct to you. Feedback is the flashlight that shows you these hidden errors. There are three good sources:

1. **Record and review yourself.** Record a two-minute talk, then listen as if you were a teacher. You will catch mistakes you never noticed while speaking. Keep a list of the errors that keep coming back.
2. **Ask a partner or tutor to correct recurring errors.** Don't ask them to fix everything—that is overwhelming. Ask them to write down the two or three mistakes you make most often. Then you have a clear target.
3. **Attack one error at a time.** Take your most common mistake and focus only on it for a week. Maybe you always forget the "s" on "he goes." For seven days, that is your only mission. Then move to the next one.

#### 4. Attack Your Specific Weak Spots

General practice keeps you on the plateau. Targeted practice gets you off it. Be honest about where you are weakest. Is it pronunciation of certain sounds? Speaking about abstract ideas? Understanding fast speakers? Using connecting words to sound fluent? Whatever it is, build practice around that exact weakness instead of practicing what you are already good at. We naturally avoid our weak spots because they feel bad. That avoidance is part of what built the plateau in the first place.

#### 5. Vary Your Input

If you always listen to the same teacher, the same podcast, or the same accent, your ears stop being challenged. Variety wakes them up. Listen to new accents—British, Australian, Indian, American. Watch material that is slightly above your level, where you understand most but have to work for the rest. Read harder articles and notice new phrases. New input gives you new language to put into your mouth. You cannot speak words you have never met.

## A Plateau Symptom-to-Fix Guide

Use this table to diagnose yourself. Find the symptom that sounds most like you, and apply the matching fix this week.

Plateau Symptom	The Fix
You say the same words and phrases every time	Add constraints: ban your "safe" words and force in new vocabulary
You only feel confident on familiar topics	Practice abstract and opinion topics; debate ideas out loud
You make the same mistakes again and again	Record yourself, find your top errors, fix one at a time
Conversations feel easy but never get better	Raise the difficulty; speak for three minutes, not one
You feel like you're not improving at all	Start measuring again—track words used, time spoken, errors fixed
You understand your usual teacher but no one else	Vary your input: new accents, faster speakers, harder material
You avoid certain sounds, tenses, or topics	Attack that exact weak spot directly for one full week
You've lost motivation to practice	Set one small, hard, measurable goal and beat it

## Measure Again, So You Can See the Climb

Remember the fourth cause of the plateau—you stopped measuring. This is worth its own attention, because measuring does two things at once. It shows you whether your new strategies are working, and it keeps your motivation alive when the changes are too small to feel.

Pick one or two simple numbers to track. How many seconds can you speak on a topic without stopping? How many filler words slip out in two

minutes? How many of this week's new words did you actually use in conversation? Write the number down today, and check it again in two weeks. Even tiny improvements, when you can see them on paper, prove that the plateau is breaking. Progress you can measure is progress you can trust.

*“The learners who break through are not the most talented. They are the ones who kept making it harder when it would have been easier to stay comfortable.”*

## **Be Patient, and Keep Pushing**

Here is the truth that I want you to hold onto. The plateau is temporary, but only if you treat it as a signal to change. It is your brain telling you that the old level is fully built and it is time to construct the next one. Building the next level takes longer than the first, and it takes more deliberate effort. That is not bad news. It is just the nature of getting good at something real.

Some days it will feel like nothing is moving. Trust the process anyway. The growth on a plateau is often invisible right up until the moment it becomes obvious—you suddenly handle a hard conversation, or you say a complex sentence without thinking, and you realize you have climbed. That moment comes to the learners who keep pushing with intention. It does not come to the ones who quit during the flat part.

So choose two strategies from this chapter. Make your practice harder this week than it was last week. Get one piece of honest feedback. Attack one weak spot. Measure one number. The plateau is not a wall—it is a staircase that only appears when you decide to step up. Keep climbing. You are closer to the next level than you feel.

### REMEMBER THIS

- A plateau is normal and usually arrives around B1–B2. It means you have come far, not that you have failed.
- Early progress is always fastest because the easy, high-value gains come first. Later gains are smaller and need more effort.
- Most plateaus are caused by practice that became too easy, too repetitive, too familiar, or that you stopped measuring.
- Break through by deliberately raising the difficulty: harder topics, abstract subjects, debate, and longer monologues.
- Add constraints—no fillers, speak three minutes, force in new vocabulary—to block your easy habits.
- Get real feedback by recording yourself and asking a partner or tutor for your top recurring errors, then fix one at a time.
- Attack your specific weak spots instead of practicing what you are already good at.
- Vary your input with new accents and harder material, and start measuring again to see the climb.
- The plateau ends if you keep pushing with intention. Stay comfortable and you stay flat.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

# Beyond Fluent

*What happens after you can finally speak—and why you'll never really be “finished.”*

---

**D**o you remember the person we met on the very first page of this book? The one standing in a room, with a sentence ready in their head—and nothing coming out. The wall in the throat. The heat in the face. The silence that lasted one second too long, and felt like an hour. That person was you. And I want you to notice something before we go any further: you are not that person anymore.

You may not feel it yet. Change is sneaky like that. You were too busy practicing to watch yourself change. But somewhere in these pages—between the first awkward sentence you said out loud to your own mirror and the last conversation you had with a real human being—the wall came down. Not because you knocked it down in one heroic moment. Because you walked through it, again and again, until it stopped being a wall and started being a door.

So here we are, on the last page. And the question that matters now is not “How do I start speaking?” You already know. The question is: *What now?* What do you do with a skill once you finally have it? How do you keep it—and how do you make it grow into something even bigger than fluency? That is what this final chapter is about. And it is, I promise you, the most hopeful chapter in the book.

## Fluent Is Not a Finish Line

Let's clear up the biggest misunderstanding in language learning. People imagine “fluent” as a door at the end of a long hallway. You walk, you work, you suffer—and one day you reach the door, open it, and you're done. Finished. Certified. A fluent person, forever.

That door does not exist. And that is wonderful news.

Fluency is not a place you arrive at. It is a way of moving. Think about your first language. Are you “finished” with it? Of course not. You still learn new words. You still hear an expression you've never heard and think, “Oh, I like that.” You still sometimes search for the right word and can't find it. Native speakers are not finished either. Nobody is. Language is alive, and you are alive, and the two of you keep growing together for the rest of your life.

So let go of the idea that you are chasing a finish line. Instead, picture it this way: fluency is the moment English stops being a subject you study and becomes a *tool you live in*. You used to climb into English like a stiff, uncomfortable suit. Now you wear it like your own clothes. It bends when you bend. It carries your jokes, your opinions, your bad days, your dreams. That is what we were really building this whole time—not a test score, but a second voice for your one life.

*“Fluency is not a door at the end of the hallway. It is the moment the hallway becomes a place you simply live.”*

## Use It or Lose It

Here is the hard truth, said gently: a language you do not use slowly fades. Not all at once. The words don't disappear—they just get harder to reach, like a phone number you knew by heart years ago. The good news is that this is completely in your control. Maintaining your English is far, far easier than building it was. You are not pushing a heavy car uphill anymore. You're just keeping it running.

And keeping it running takes surprisingly little. You don't need three hours a day. You need *contact*—regular, living contact with the language. The single most important rule for the rest of your English life is this: **keep speaking**. Speaking is a physical skill, like swimming or driving. It lives in

your mouth and your reflexes, not only in your head. The only way to keep a physical skill is to keep doing it.

So protect your speaking. Find at least one steady way to talk every week. A language partner. A weekly call with a friend who speaks English. A conversation group online. A tutor. Even talking to yourself out loud—narrating your day, arguing with a podcast, explaining your plans to the empty kitchen—keeps the machine warm. It feels silly. It works anyway. The students who keep their English are never the ones with the best grammar. They are the ones who simply never stopped opening their mouths.

### **TRY THIS NOW**

Build your “keep-it-alive” plan in the next two minutes. Write down three things: (1) one person or place where you will speak English every week—name it specifically; (2) one thing in English you genuinely enjoy and will consume regularly (a show, a podcast, a creator, a book); (3) one tiny daily habit, under five minutes—narrate your morning coffee, read one paragraph aloud, voice-note a friend. Three lines. That's your whole maintenance system. Say the plan out loud right now, in English, as if you're telling a friend what you're going to do.

## **Make English Part of a Life You Love**

Here is the secret that separates people who keep their English for life from people who lose it: the first group stopped “studying.” They didn't become lazy. They became smart. They wove English into the parts of their life they already loved—so that practice stopped feeling like practice at all.

If you love cooking, follow English-speaking cooks and make the recipes. If you love football, listen to the matches and the arguments in English. If you love a certain band, read the interviews, learn the lyrics, understand the jokes. If you're into a video game, a TV series, a topic, a hobby—there is a whole English-speaking world built around it, full of people who care about exactly what you care about. Go live there.

When you do this, something magical happens. You forget you're learning. You're just enjoying a show, laughing at a joke, getting lost in a story—and the English pours into you for free, in the background, the same way you learned your first language as a child. You didn't study your mother tongue. You lived it. Now you can do the same thing again, on purpose, as an adult. That is the most powerful study method on earth, and it doesn't feel like study at all.

*“The people who keep their English forever are not the ones who study hardest. They are the ones who made English part of a life they already enjoyed.”*

## **Climbing Higher: From Confident to Advanced**

Maybe you've reached that confident B2 level—you can talk about almost anything, handle real conversations, hold your own. That is a tremendous achievement, and most learners on earth never reach it. But maybe you want more. Maybe you want to sound not just clear, but *rich*. Not just understood, but *impressive*. That higher ground—C1 and C2, advanced and near-native—is real, and it is reachable. Here is what the climb looks like.

### **Richer vocabulary, not bigger**

Advanced speakers don't just know more words—they know the *right* word for the exact shade of meaning they want. The difference between “good” and “decent,” “brilliant,” “solid,” and “flawless.” You build this by noticing. When you read or listen and meet a word that lands perfectly, steal it. Write it down. Use it that same week, out loud, three times. Precision is what makes speech feel powerful.

### **Idioms and the music of natural speech**

“It's not my cup of tea.” “Let's play it by ear.” “That rings a bell.” Idioms are the fingerprints of a real speaker. You can't memorize a list of them and

expect magic—you'll sound like a robot reciting proverbs. Instead, collect the ones you actually hear, in context, and use them lightly. A few natural idioms, dropped at the right moment, instantly make you sound like someone who lives in the language.

### **Register: knowing when to switch**

Advanced speaking means knowing which English to use. You don't talk to your boss the way you talk to your best friend. "I'd be grateful if you could..." versus "Hey, can you..."—same meaning, completely different worlds. Listen for the difference between formal and casual English everywhere you go. The ability to slide smoothly between them is one of the clearest signs of a truly skilled speaker.

### **Cultural nuance**

The highest level isn't about grammar at all. It's about getting the joke, catching the sarcasm, knowing why something is funny or rude or kind. This only comes from time spent inside the culture—its films, its humor, its real conversations. You can't rush it, and you don't need to. It arrives, quietly, as a gift for everyone who stays.

## **Point Your English at Something Real**

Now the most important question of all. You worked so hard for this voice—what are you going to *do* with it?

Because English was never the goal. English is a key, and the goal is everything the key unlocks. The job you couldn't apply for before. The interview you can now walk into. The country you can travel through, ordering food, asking directions, making a stranger laugh. The university course taught in a language that used to scare you. The book you can finally read in the words the author actually wrote. And—maybe most precious of all—the friendships. The people across the world you can now know directly, heart to heart, with no one translating in between.

Aim your English at a real goal, and the language will take care of itself. A learner who is just “studying English” runs out of fuel. A learner who is preparing for a trip to Scotland, or a promotion at work, or a conversation with a person they care about—that learner never runs out, because the language has somewhere to go. Give your English a destination. Then watch how fast it carries you there.

### TRY THIS NOW

Finish this sentence, out loud, in English: “Because I can speak English now, this year I am going to...” Be specific and be brave. Not “improve my English”—that’s the key, not the door. Name the door. A job. A trip. A friend. A class. A conversation you’ve been afraid to have. Say it, hear yourself say it, and let it become real. That sentence is the reason you picked up this book in the first place.

## The Last Page

So we come back to where we began. To that room. To that silence. To the wall in your throat.

I want you to understand something about that frozen, silent person on page one. They weren’t broken. They weren’t “bad at languages.” They were simply waiting for permission—permission to speak before they felt ready, to be imperfect out loud, to let the wrong words come out so the right ones could follow. That’s all speaking ever required. Not more talent. Not more grammar. Just the courage to begin while still imperfect.

Everything in this book—every method, every drill, every story from the thousands of students who walked this path before you—was pointing at one simple, stubborn truth: **speaking is a skill built by speaking**. Not by reading about it. Not by studying it one more year. Not by waiting until you’re “good enough.” You learned to speak by speaking, the way you learned to walk by falling, the way you learned everything that ever mattered—clumsily, bravely, in motion.

*“You now have every tool you will ever need. The only thing left is the one thing no book can do for you: open your mouth.”*

And now you have every tool you need. You have the methods. You have the habits. You have the proof, in your own memory, of conversations you've already survived and even enjoyed. The toolbox is full. There is nothing missing. There is no secret chapter, no final trick, no last piece you're still lacking. The book ends here because the book is done. The rest is not on these pages. The rest is in your voice.

So here is my final ask—and it's the same thing I asked of you in chapter one, only now you know you can do it. Close this book. Look up. Find a person, a phone, a microphone, a mirror, anything. And speak. Not tomorrow, not when you feel ready, not when your grammar is perfect. Now. While the courage is warm. While you still remember that the wall was never really a wall.

You spent so long believing the silence was who you were. It never was. The silence was just the moment before you spoke. And you, my friend—you are finally, beautifully, out of silence.

Go on. Say something. The whole world is waiting to hear your voice.

### REMEMBER THIS

- Fluent is not a finish line—it's the moment English stops being a subject you study and becomes a tool you live in and enjoy.
- Use it or lose it: keep speaking every week, in any way you can. Speaking is a physical skill kept alive only by doing it.
- Weave English into a life you already love—shows, hobbies, music, friends—so practice stops feeling like study.
- To climb toward advanced, chase precision over size: the exact word, natural idioms, the right register, and real cultural understanding.
- Point your English at a real goal—work, travel, study, friendship—and the language will carry you there.
- Speaking is a skill built by speaking. You have every tool you need. The only thing left is to open your mouth—now.

YOUR TOOLKIT

# Plans, Prompts & Trackers

*Everything you need to start tonight: a 90-day plan, 100 things to talk about, everyday phrases, and the trackers that prove you're improving.*

## APPENDIX A

# The 90-Day Speaking Plan

*Don't wonder what to do each day. Just open this page and follow it.*

---

**Y**ou have learned the methods. Now you need a path. This appendix turns everything in the book into one simple plan you can follow for the next 90 days. The plan asks for only 10 to 15 minutes a day. That is less time than you spend scrolling your phone in the morning. The secret is not the amount of time. The secret is that you do it *every single day*. Open this page, find today's week, and do the routine. When the day is done, tick the box. Don't try to be perfect. Don't try to do extra. Just do the small thing today, and then do it again tomorrow.

One honest warning before you start: you will miss a day. Maybe two. That is normal, and it does not mean you failed. The people who reach B2 are not the ones who never miss. They are the ones who come back the next day. So if you skip, do not quit and do not try to "catch up" by doing three days at once. Just open this page tomorrow and continue where you are. Feel free to adapt the plan to your life, your job, and the topics you care about. It is your plan now.

Before Day 1, set up two simple things. First, choose a fixed time and place for your daily practice. Maybe it is right after you brush your teeth, or during your walk, or in the car before work. When practice is tied to something you already do every day, you almost never forget it. Second, get a way to track your numbers. A small notebook, a note on your phone, or even the blank lines on this page will do. You do not need an app. You just need somewhere to write your daily word count and tick that the day is done. Tracking is not extra work; it is the thing that keeps you honest and shows you, in black and white, that you are getting better.

Why does such a small daily routine work so well? Because speaking is a physical skill, like swimming or playing the guitar. You cannot learn it by reading about it. Your mouth, your ears, and your brain have to do the work, and they only improve through repeated practice. Ten focused minutes every day beats a three-hour study session once a week, every time. The daily habit also removes fear. The more often you speak, the less scary speaking becomes, until one day you notice you are talking in English without your heart racing. That day is coming. The plan below will take you there step by step.

## How the Daily Routine Works

Every day in this plan has the same simple shape. Once you learn it, you never have to think about it again. The three parts are:

1. **Warm-up sprint (1 minute).** One Stopwatch Method sprint. Pick a topic, start the timer, speak for 60 seconds, and count your words. Write the number down.
2. **Main exercise (8 to 12 minutes).** The focus skill for that week, such as thinking in English, shadowing, learning chunks, or a real conversation.
3. **Review (1 to 2 minutes).** Quick spaced review of the words and chunks you are learning, plus a note on one thing to fix tomorrow.

### YOUR DAILY ROUTINE AT A GLANCE

Part	Time	What you do
Warm-up sprint	1 min	One 60-second Stopwatch sprint; count and record your words.
Main exercise	8–12 min	This week's focus skill (see your weekly block below).
Review	1–2 min	Review today's chunks and words; note one fix for tomorrow.

**On busy days:** do only the 1-minute warm-up sprint. That is it. One minute keeps the habit alive, and the habit is the whole game. A 1-minute day still counts as a day. Never let a busy day become a zero day.

## Days 1–30: Break the Silence

The goal of the first month is not perfect English. The goal is to make speaking a daily habit and to get used to the sound of your own voice in English. You will set a baseline, start sprinting, and begin killing translation in your head.

### Week 1 — Baseline and the habit

1. **Day 1, baseline test.** Do three Stopwatch sprints on an easy topic (your morning, your job, your city). Write down your best words-per-minute. This is your starting number. Do not judge it. Just record it.
2. **Days 2–7, daily.** One warm-up sprint, then 8 minutes of talking to yourself out loud about your day. End with a 1-minute review. Total: about 10 minutes.
3. **Focus:** simply speaking out loud every day without stopping for translation.
4. **Milestone:** 7 days in a row, and a baseline number written on this page: \_\_\_\_\_ words/min.

## Week 2 — Stopwatch sprints become normal

1. **Warm-up:** one sprint daily. Aim to beat yesterday's word count, even by one word.
2. **Main (10 min):** two extra sprints on different topics, then describe one photo on your phone out loud for two minutes.
3. **Review:** note the words you wanted but didn't know. Look up three of them.
4. **Focus:** the five rules, especially "avoid long pauses." Keep going even when you make mistakes.
5. **Milestone:** your best sprint is higher than your Day 1 baseline.

## Week 3 — Start thinking in English

1. **Warm-up:** one sprint daily.
2. **Main (10 min):** the thinking-in-English drill. Narrate small actions silently in English ("I am opening the door, I am making tea"). Then say a few of them out loud.
3. **Review:** keep a simple word list. Review yesterday's words for one minute.
4. **Focus:** kill translation. When you catch yourself translating, stop and try to feel the meaning directly.
5. **Milestone:** you can narrate one full minute of small actions without switching to your native language.

#### **Week 4 – Build the habit wall**

1. **Warm-up:** one sprint daily.
2. **Main (10 min):** mix it up. Two days of sprints, two days of self-talk, two days of thinking drills, one free day on any topic you enjoy.
3. **Review:** start your first batch of 10 useful chunks (set phrases like "I'd say...", "the thing is...", "to be honest...").
4. **Focus:** consistency. Look back at four weeks of ticks and trust the process.
5. **Milestone:** 30 days done. Re-do the baseline test. Compare your number. You should already see growth.

### **Days 31–60: Build Flow**

Now the habit is real. In month two you make your speech richer and smoother. You grow your vocabulary and chunks, you copy native rhythm with shadowing, you record yourself, and you work hard on the five rules of bold speaking. By the end you will sound more natural and move faster.

#### **Week 5 – Chunks over single words**

1. **Warm-up:** one sprint daily, now trying to use a new chunk in each sprint.
2. **Main (10 min):** learn five new chunks each day and use each one in a spoken sentence. Speak the sentences out loud, not just in your head.
3. **Review:** spaced review of last week's chunks. Drop the ones that feel easy; keep practicing the hard ones.
4. **Focus:** learning chunks, not isolated words.
5. **Milestone:** 25 new chunks you can say without thinking.

### Week 6 — Shadowing and recording

1. **Warm-up:** one sprint daily.
2. **Main (12 min):** shadow a short clip (30–60 seconds) of a speaker you like. Play, copy out loud at the same time, repeat five times. Then record yourself saying the same lines.
3. **Review:** listen back to your recording for one minute. Note one sound to fix.
4. **Focus:** pronunciation and rhythm. Copy the music of the language, not just the words.
5. **Milestone:** one recording where your rhythm is close to the original.

### Week 7 — The five rules in action

1. **Warm-up:** one sprint, but this time speak faster *and* louder than feels comfortable.
2. **Main (10 min):** pick one of the five rules each day (speak faster, express emotion, speak louder, be accurate, avoid long pauses) and exaggerate it in a two-minute monologue.
3. **Review:** chunks and words, two minutes.
4. **Focus:** bold speaking. Sound alive, not flat.
5. **Milestone:** you can speak a full minute with real emotion in your voice and no long, dead pauses.

### Week 8 — Just-enough grammar and re-test

1. **Warm-up:** one sprint daily.
2. **Main (10 min):** pick one small grammar point that keeps tripping you (past tense, articles, question forms). Drill it inside spoken sentences, not on paper.
3. **Review:** spaced review of your full chunk list.
4. **Focus:** just-enough grammar to be understood, then back to speaking.
5. **Milestone:** 60 days done. Re-test your words-per-minute. Most learners are clearly faster and smoother than their Day 1 number now.

## Days 61–90: Real Conversations

This is where it all comes together. In the final month you stop only talking to yourself and start talking to real people. You learn survival phrases, find a partner, and push into harder topics. By Day 90 you should be having real conversations and feeling like a B2 speaker who can handle daily life in English.

### Week 9 — Survival phrases

1. **Warm-up:** one sprint daily.
2. **Main (10 min):** learn and rehearse survival phrases out loud: "Could you repeat that?", "How do you say...?", "Sorry, I didn't catch that." Role-play a shop, a café, and asking for directions.
3. **Review:** chunks plus survival phrases, two minutes.
4. **Focus:** phrases that keep a conversation alive when you get stuck.
5. **Milestone:** 15 survival phrases you can use instantly without thinking.

### **Week 10 — Find a partner and talk**

1. **Warm-up:** one sprint daily.
2. **Main (10–15 min):** find a speaking partner (a language app, a friend, an online exchange). Have at least two short real conversations this week. On non-partner days, do a mock conversation out loud, playing both sides.
3. **Review:** after each real talk, note three words you wished you had known.
4. **Focus:** real interaction, including listening and replying live.
5. **Milestone:** two real conversations done, each five minutes or longer.

### **Week 11 — Push your topics**

1. **Warm-up:** one sprint on a harder topic (your opinion on a news story, a problem at work, a goal for next year).
2. **Main (12 min):** talk for three minutes on one harder topic, then again, trying to use new chunks and clearer structure.
3. **Review:** spaced review; retire chunks you have mastered.
4. **Focus:** moving from simple facts to opinions and reasons.
5. **Milestone:** a clear three-minute monologue giving an opinion with two reasons.

### **Week 12 — Conversations get longer**

1. **Warm-up:** one sprint daily.
2. **Main (10–15 min):** three real conversations this week. Try to keep each one going longer by asking the other person questions and following up.
3. **Review:** note your most common mistake and drill it for one minute.
4. **Focus:** keeping conversations flowing both ways.
5. **Milestone:** a 10-minute conversation where you carried your half.

### **Week 13 — Final test and celebrate**

1. **Day 85, final speed test.** Do three Stopwatch sprints and record your best words-per-minute.
2. **Compare:** put your Day 1 number, Day 30, Day 60, and Day 90 side by side. See how far you have come.
3. **Main (the last days):** one longer real conversation and a recording of yourself speaking freely for two minutes. Listen to it next to a Week 1 recording.
4. **Focus:** notice your progress and celebrate it honestly. You earned it.
5. **Milestone:** 90 days done, and a clear, measurable jump in speed and confidence.

## YOUR MILESTONES ACROSS 90 DAYS

Checkpoint	What to measure	Your result
Day 1	Baseline words/min	_____
Day 30	Words/min + 30-day streak	_____
Day 60	Words/min + 50 chunks	_____
Day 90	Words/min + real conversations	_____

If you started around 40 to 50 words per minute, your goal by Day 90 is to be moving past 90 words per minute, speaking with emotion, and handling a real conversation without freezing. That is the road from roughly A2 to B2 in about 90 days. It is not magic. It is 10 minutes a day, repeated, with honesty about the days you miss and the courage to come back.

### REMEMBER THIS

- Open this page, find today's week, do the three-part routine, tick the box. Don't overthink it.
- The daily shape never changes: one warm-up sprint, one main exercise, one short review.
- On a busy day, do only the 1-minute sprint. A 1-minute day still counts. Never a zero day.
- You will miss days. That is fine. Do not quit and do not "catch up." Just continue tomorrow.
- Test your words-per-minute on Day 1, 30, 60, and 90 so you can see your real progress.
- Adapt the plan to your life and your topics. It is your plan now, so make it yours.
- Consistency beats intensity. Small daily action is what carries you from A2 to B2.

## APPENDIX B

# 100 Things to Talk About

*Never sit in silence wondering what to practice. Pick a number and start the clock.*

---

**H**ere is how to use this list. Pick one prompt. Set a timer for sixty seconds. Then speak out loud, alone, without stopping, until the time is up. Do not worry about mistakes. Do not stop to look up a word. If you forget a word, say it in a simpler way and keep going. Your only job is to keep talking and to say as many words as you can. When the timer stops, count your words if you like, or just notice how it felt. Then try the same prompt again tomorrow, or next week, and see if you can speak longer and faster. Re-using a favorite prompt is one of the best things you can do, because you will hear yourself getting better.

The prompts below are organized into five groups. The first groups are easy, and the later groups make you think harder. Start anywhere you like. If a prompt feels too hard, jump to an easier group. If it feels too easy, jump up. Every level of learner can find something here. Let's begin.

## Group 1: Easy Starters — About You

These are the simplest prompts. They are about your own life, so you already know what to say. Use them on busy days or when you feel nervous. You cannot get them wrong.

1. Describe your morning today, from the moment you woke up.
2. Talk about the people in your family.
3. What is your favorite food, and why do you love it?
4. Describe your hometown to someone who has never been there.
5. What do you do for work or study every day?
6. Talk about your best friend and how you met.

7. What is in your bag or your pockets right now?
8. Describe what you ate yesterday for every meal.
9. What do you usually do on the weekend?
10. Talk about a pet you have, or a pet you would like.
11. Describe the clothes you are wearing today.
12. What time do you wake up and go to sleep, and why?
13. Talk about your favorite drink, hot or cold.
14. Describe the way you get to work or school.
15. What did you do last night after dinner?
16. Talk about a place in your town that you visit often.
17. Describe your phone and the apps you use the most.
18. What kind of music do you listen to?
19. Talk about your daily routine, step by step.
20. Describe one thing you are good at.

## **Group 2: Tell a Story**

Now you become a storyteller. Stories are easy to talk about because they have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Speak slowly and add small details: who was there, where you were, and how you felt.

1. Tell the story of a trip you took that you will never forget.
2. Describe the best day of your whole life.
3. Talk about the worst day you ever had.
4. Tell about a time you were really scared.
5. Share a funny memory that still makes you laugh.
6. Describe a time you got lost somewhere.
7. Tell the story of your first day at a new job or school.
8. Talk about a time you helped a stranger.
9. Describe a moment when you felt very proud of yourself.

10. Tell about a time you made a big mistake.
11. Share a happy memory from when you were a child.
12. Describe a wedding, party, or celebration you went to.
13. Tell about a time you tried something for the first time.
14. Talk about a gift you received that meant a lot to you.
15. Describe a time you were caught in bad weather.
16. Tell the story of how you learned to ride a bike or drive a car.
17. Talk about a time you missed a bus, train, or plane.
18. Describe a meal you cooked that went very right or very wrong.
19. Tell about a time a small thing changed your whole day.
20. Share the story of a person who taught you something important.

### **Group 3: Opinions & Favorites**

Here you say what you think and what you like. There are no wrong answers. The fun part is giving reasons. After every opinion, try to add the word "because" and keep talking.

1. What is the best film you have ever seen, and why?
2. Describe a hobby you love and how you got into it.
3. Which is better, the city or the countryside?
4. What is your favorite season of the year?
5. What is the best book or story you have read?
6. Tea or coffee? Defend your choice.
7. What is the best holiday you can imagine?
8. Which is better, summer or winter?
9. What is your favorite way to relax after a hard day?
10. Talk about a TV show everyone should watch.
11. What is the best meal you have ever tasted?
12. Are mornings better than nights, or the other way around?

13. What is the most beautiful place you have ever seen?
14. Which is better, reading a book or watching the film of it?
15. What is your favorite kind of weather, and why?
16. Talk about a sport you enjoy watching or playing.
17. What is the best gift you can give someone?
18. Cats or dogs? Make your case.
19. What is your favorite way to spend a rainy day?
20. What is one thing you think everyone should try once?

### **Group 4: Imagine & Describe**

Now use your imagination. These prompts ask you to paint a picture with words or to dream a little. Close your eyes if it helps, then describe what you see in as much detail as you can.

1. Describe the room you are sitting in right now, in detail.
2. Talk about your dream house, room by room.
3. Describe your idea of a perfect day, from morning to night.
4. What would you do with a completely free week?
5. Imagine you won a lot of money. What would you do first?
6. Describe your dream holiday and where you would go.
7. If you could have any job in the world, what would it be?
8. Describe the view from your window right now.
9. Imagine you could meet any person, alive or in history. Who, and why?
10. Describe your perfect breakfast in full detail.
11. If you could live in any country, where would it be?
12. Imagine you could speak every language. What would you do?
13. Describe a city you would love to visit one day.
14. If you could have one superpower, which would you choose?
15. Describe what your life might look like in ten years.

16. Imagine you could invite three people to dinner. Who would they be?
17. Describe a garden or park you would love to build.
18. If you could go back to any age, which one and why?
19. Imagine the perfect weekend with no plans and no rules.
20. Describe a machine you wish someone would invent.

## **Group 5: Think Harder — Opinions & Ideas**

These are the toughest prompts. They ask big questions with no easy answer. Take your time, give two sides if you can, and do not be afraid to change your mind while you speak. This is where your English grows the most.

1. Is social media good or bad for people? Explain both sides.
2. Would you ever live in another country for good? Why or why not?
3. What matters more, having money or having free time?
4. If you could fix one problem in the world, which one would it be?
5. Is it better to be a leader or a member of a team?
6. Should children learn a second language at a young age?
7. Is technology making our lives better or worse?
8. What does it mean to live a good life?
9. Is it better to plan everything or to go with the flow?
10. Should people work to live, or live to work?
11. Is it more important to be kind or to be honest?
12. Do you think people change, or do they stay the same?
13. Should everyone travel to other countries at least once?
14. Is failure a bad thing, or can it be a gift?
15. What is more powerful, talent or hard work?
16. Should we always tell the truth, even when it hurts?
17. Is it better to be young or to be old?

18. What is the most important lesson schools should teach?
19. Can money buy happiness? Explain your view.
20. If you could give one piece of advice to the whole world, what would it be?

### HOW TO USE THESE

Keep it simple and keep it daily. Pick a number, set your timer for sixty seconds, and speak without stopping. Do not pause to find the perfect word; say it another way and move on. Mistakes are fine, because nobody is listening but you.

Try to beat your last word count. Speak the same prompt again on another day and you will feel yourself getting faster and smoother. That feeling is your proof that the method works. If a prompt is too hard, drop down a group. If it is too easy, climb up. The goal is never silence and never perfect English. The goal is more words, more often.

### REMEMBER THIS

- You will never run out of things to say. There are one hundred prompts here, and you can mix and re-use them forever.
- Sixty seconds without stopping beats five careful minutes with long pauses. Keep the words flowing.
- Re-use your favorite prompts on purpose. Speaking the same one again is how you see your speed grow.
- Start with the easy groups on hard days, and climb to the harder groups when you feel ready.
- Mistakes do not matter here. You are alone, the clock is running, and every word counts.

## APPENDIX C

# Phrases You'll Use Every Day

*Memorize these ready-made pieces and you'll never have to build them from zero again.*

---

**H**ere is the secret that this whole appendix is built on: fluent speakers do not build most of their sentences word by word. They pull out whole blocks they already know. So learn these phrases as complete pieces. Say each one out loud, again and again, until it comes out of your mouth without thinking. When you do that, you will always have something ready to say, even on the days when your brain feels slow and empty. Pick a few phrases from each list below, drill them until they feel automatic, and then start dropping them into real conversations.

## 1. Starting and greeting

The first few seconds of a conversation are easy to mess up because you feel nervous. Have these ready so you never freeze at "hello."

## OPENERS AND GREETINGS FOR ANY CASUAL CONVERSATION

Phrase	When to use it
How's it going?	A friendly, relaxed "hello" for almost anyone. You can answer it the same way.
How are you doing?	A warm greeting, a little softer than "How are you?"
What's up? / What's new?	Very casual, for friends and people your age.
Long time no see!	When you meet someone you haven't seen in a while.
It's good to see you.	A warm, polite greeting for friends or colleagues.
Hey, nice to meet you.	The first time you meet someone.
How have you been?	When you see someone again after some time apart.
Good to see you again.	For someone you have met before but not recently.
How's your day going?	A natural way to start talking with a coworker or shop assistant.
Not much, you?	The easy answer when someone asks "What's up?"

## 2. Buying time and thinking

You do not have to answer instantly. Native speakers pause all the time. These phrases fill the silence in English (not in your own language) and give your brain a few seconds to catch up.

## PHRASES TO GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO THINK

Phrase	When to use it
Let me think...	When you need a moment before you answer.
That's a good question.	To buy time and sound thoughtful when someone asks you something hard.
How can I put this...	When you are choosing the right words to say something carefully.
Hmm, let me see.	A short, natural pause while you think.
Well, it depends.	When the answer is not simple and you need a second.
Give me a second.	When you need a real pause to find your words.
How should I say this?	When the idea is tricky and you want to phrase it well.
That's an interesting point.	To respond positively while you gather your thoughts.
Let me put it this way...	When you want to explain something in a different, clearer way.
Off the top of my head...	Before giving a quick answer you haven't fully thought through.

### 3. Giving opinions

People love to hear what you think. Start your opinion with one of these openers and the rest of your sentence will follow more easily.

## WAYS TO SHARE WHAT YOU THINK

Phrase	When to use it
If you ask me...	A friendly, confident way to give your personal opinion.
I'd say...	A soft, easy way to state what you think.
The way I see it...	To present your view of a situation.
In my opinion...	A clear, simple opener for any opinion.
I think / I feel that...	The most common, everyday way to give an opinion.
Personally, I...	To make clear this is just your own view.
To be honest...	When you want to say something direct or a little surprising.
It seems to me that...	A gentle way to share an opinion you are not 100% sure of.
From my point of view...	To show you are speaking from your own experience.
I'm a big fan of...	To say you really like something.

## 4. Agreeing and disagreeing

You will need to agree and disagree in almost every conversation. Disagreeing politely is a real skill. Notice how the "disagree" phrases stay soft and friendly.

## AGREEING AND DISAGREEING WITHOUT BEING RUDE

Phrase	When to use it
Exactly!	To strongly agree with what someone just said.
That's so true.	To warmly agree.
I totally agree.	To clearly show you are on the same side.
Good point.	To agree that someone made a smart comment.
You're absolutely right.	To agree fully and confidently.
I see your point, but...	To disagree politely after acknowledging the other person.
I'm not so sure.	A gentle way to say you don't fully agree.
I see it a bit differently.	A soft, respectful way to disagree.
Yes and no.	When you partly agree and partly disagree.
I get what you mean, but...	To show you understand before offering a different view.

## 5. Asking for help and clarification

Never pretend you understood when you didn't. Asking for help is normal and people respect it. These phrases keep the conversation going instead of letting it stop.

## ASKING PEOPLE TO REPEAT, SLOW DOWN, OR EXPLAIN

Phrase	When to use it
Sorry, could you repeat that?	When you didn't catch what someone said.
What does ___ mean?	When you hear a word you don't know.
Could you speak more slowly, please?	When someone is talking too fast for you.
Sorry, I didn't catch that.	A natural way to say you missed what was said.
What do you mean?	When you don't fully understand someone's idea.
Can you give me an example?	When an explanation is still unclear.
How do you say ___ in English?	When you know the idea but not the English word.
Do you mean ___?	To check that you understood correctly.
Sorry, my English isn't perfect.	To ask for patience in a friendly, honest way.
Could you write that down?	When you need to see a word or number to understand it.

## 6. Keeping a conversation going

A good conversation is like a ball you keep passing back. After someone speaks, send the ball back with a question. These phrases do exactly that.

## QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS THAT KEEP PEOPLE TALKING

Phrase	When to use it
Really? Tell me more.	To show interest and invite the person to keep talking.
What about you?	To pass a question back after you answer it.
And then what happened?	To keep a story moving.
How did that go?	To ask about something the person mentioned earlier.
What do you think about...?	To bring the other person into the topic.
So, what's the story?	A friendly way to ask for details.
That reminds me...	To add something connected and keep the talk flowing.
Speaking of that...	To move smoothly to a related topic.
Have you ever...?	To open up a new, easy topic.
How long have you been...?	To ask about someone's job, hobby, or city.

## 7. Reacting and showing interest

You don't always need full sentences. Short reactions show you are listening and make the other person enjoy talking to you. Drop these in often.

## QUICK REACTIONS TO SHOW YOU ARE LISTENING

Phrase	When to use it
No way!	To react with surprise to something exciting or shocking.
That's amazing!	To react happily to good news.
Oh, I see.	To show you now understand.
Wow, really?	To show surprise and interest.
That's great to hear.	To respond warmly to good news.
Oh no, I'm sorry to hear that.	To respond with care to bad news.
That makes sense.	To show an explanation was clear and logical.
You're kidding!	To react to something hard to believe.
That sounds fun.	To react positively to someone's plans.
Good for you!	To congratulate someone in a friendly way.

## 8. Ending politely

Ending well leaves a good feeling. Don't just disappear. Use one of these to close the conversation kindly and leave the door open for next time.

## POLITE WAYS TO END A CONVERSATION

Phrase	When to use it
It was great talking to you.	A warm, friendly way to close any chat.
I'd better get going.	To say you need to leave, politely.
Let's catch up soon.	To suggest meeting or talking again.
I should let you go.	A polite way to end when the other person seems busy.
We'll talk soon, okay?	To close warmly and promise to reconnect.
Take care!	A friendly goodbye for almost anyone.
Have a good one!	A relaxed, casual goodbye.
Let's keep in touch.	To say you want to stay connected.
Anyway, I won't keep you.	A polite way to wrap up when someone is busy.
It was nice meeting you.	To end a first meeting on a good note.

## HOW TO LEARN THESE

Don't try to learn the whole list at once. That will only overwhelm you. Instead, do this:

- **Pick five.** Choose five phrases that feel useful for your life right now. Five is enough.
- **Say them out loud.** Reading is not enough. Your mouth has to practice the sounds, not just your eyes. Repeat each phrase ten times.
- **Learn the whole block.** Never break a phrase into single words. Learn "How's it going?" as one sound, like one long word.
- **Use one today.** Find one chance in the next 24 hours to actually say one of your phrases to a real person, online or in person.
- **Come back tomorrow.** Add five more only when the first five come out automatically, without you thinking.

Slow and steady wins here. Ten phrases you can use beat a hundred you only recognize.

## REMEMBER THIS

- Fluent speakers reuse ready-made chunks. They rarely build sentences from zero, and now neither do you.
- Learn each phrase as one whole block, and say it out loud until it comes without thinking.
- It is normal to pause. Use a thinking phrase in English instead of going silent.
- Asking someone to repeat or slow down keeps the conversation alive. It is a strength, not a weakness.
- Pass the ball back with a question, and end every conversation warmly so people want to talk to you again.
- Master five phrases at a time. A small set you truly own is worth more than a long list you only half know.

## APPENDIX D

# Your Progress Trackers

*Proof you're improving—in your own handwriting.*

---

**N**umbers keep you going. When practice feels slow, these pages show you how far you have actually come. Copy them into a notebook, rebuild them on your phone, or print them—then fill one in every single day. The most powerful number you own is the gap between your first week and today. Watch it grow.

## Tracker 1: The Daily Speaking Log

One line a day. Even a single 60-second sprint counts. The goal is a column of dates with no gaps—and a word count that climbs.

### DAILY SPEAKING LOG

Date	Topic	Words in 60s	Best yet?	How it felt (1–5)

## Tracker 2: The Monthly Speed Test

Once a month, run the same test: speak for one minute on a familiar topic and count the words. Use the same kind of topic each time so the com-

parison is fair. Most learners start near 40–50 words per minute and pass 90 within about two months of daily practice.

### MONTHLY WORDS-PER-MINUTE TEST

Month	Topic	Words per minute	Change vs. last month
Start			—
Month 1			
Month 2			
Month 3			

### Tracker 3: The 30-Day Habit Streak

Tick a box every day you practice, even for one minute. The rule is simple: **never miss two days in a row**. A chain of ticks becomes something you won't want to break.

#### 30-DAY STREAK — TICK EACH DAY YOU PRACTICE

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	8 <input type="checkbox"/>	9 <input type="checkbox"/>	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
11 <input type="checkbox"/>	12 <input type="checkbox"/>	13 <input type="checkbox"/>	14 <input type="checkbox"/>	15 <input type="checkbox"/>	16 <input type="checkbox"/>	17 <input type="checkbox"/>	18 <input type="checkbox"/>	19 <input type="checkbox"/>	20 <input type="checkbox"/>
21 <input type="checkbox"/>	22 <input type="checkbox"/>	23 <input type="checkbox"/>	24 <input type="checkbox"/>	25 <input type="checkbox"/>	26 <input type="checkbox"/>	27 <input type="checkbox"/>	28 <input type="checkbox"/>	29 <input type="checkbox"/>	30 <input type="checkbox"/>

### Tracker 4: My Word & Chunk Notebook

Whenever you reach for a word or phrase in conversation and don't have it, write it here—then practice saying it aloud in your own sentences. These are *your* missing pieces, the most valuable vocabulary you can learn.

## WORDS & CHUNKS I NEEDED

Word / phrase	My own example sentence	Reviewed (day 1 / 3 / 7)
		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

## Tracker 5: The Five Rules Scorecard

After a sprint, give yourself a quick check, dash, or arrow on each of the five rules of bold speaking. It keeps your practice honest and shows you which rule to work on next.

### FIVE RULES OF BOLD SPEAKING — SELF-SCORE

Rule	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Speak faster					
Express emotion					
Speak louder					
Be accurate enough					
Avoid long pauses					

#### REMEMBER THIS

- Track every day, even on the days you only manage one minute.
- Compare yourself only to your past self—never to anyone else.
- When you feel stuck, open these pages. The numbers will remind you how far you've already come.

## APPENDIX E

# Questions Every Learner Asks

*The doubts in your head right now—answered honestly.*

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**E**veryone who tries to speak English hits the same wall of doubt. You are not the first person to wonder if you are doing it wrong, if it is too late, or if you will ever sound natural. You are not broken, and you are not behind. Below are the real questions learners ask—the ones whispered late at night, not the polite ones asked in class. The answers are honest. Some will encourage you. Some will tell you the truth about effort. All of them point you back to the one thing that works: opening your mouth and speaking, today, before you feel ready.

## Getting Started

### **I'm a total beginner. Is this book even for me?**

Mostly, yes—with one honest note. This method works best once you have a small base, roughly A2 level: a few hundred words, simple present and past, basic questions. If you are starting from zero, spend two or three weeks first learning survival words and the most common verbs, then come back. But do not wait until you "know enough." Nobody ever feels ready. If you can build a clumsy sentence like "Yesterday I go to shop," you have enough to begin. The whole point of this book is that you learn to speak by speaking, not by waiting.

### **Do I need a teacher or a paid app to do this?**

No. You need a stopwatch, your own voice, and a few minutes a day. A teacher can help and a good app can help, but neither is required, and neither will save you if you do not practice speaking out loud. Many learners hide inside apps for years—tapping, swiping, collecting points—and still cannot order a coffee. The reason is simple: tapping is not talking. Use tools

if you like them, but the core work is you, alone, producing spoken English every single day. That part no one can do for you.

### How many words or minutes a day should I practice?

Aim for ten focused minutes minimum, twenty to thirty if you can. Quality and consistency beat marathon sessions. A practical daily target looks like this:

Block	Time	What you do
Warm-up sprint	2 min	One-minute stopwatch talk, count your words, then beat it
Think-in-English	3 min	Narrate what you are doing right now, silently or aloud
Vocabulary chunks	3 min	Review 5–10 spaced chunks, say each in a full sentence
Free talk / shadow	5–15 min	Talk to yourself, shadow audio, or record and replay

Notice the numbers are small. That is on purpose. Ten honest minutes every day for ninety days will move you further than three hours once a week. The brain learns a spoken skill through frequent, short repetition—not through occasional heroics.

### How long until I can really speak?

With daily practice, many learners go from around A2 to B2—comfortable, confident conversation—in about ninety days. But read that carefully. It is not a promise; it is what is possible when you show up every day and speak. Skip days, stay silent, only read and listen, and ninety days becomes ninety weeks. Your timeline is built from your habit, not from this book. Also redefine "really speak." You do not need perfection. The day you can hold a five-minute conversation and be understood, you are already speaking for real—and that day comes much sooner than fluency.

## THE ONE RULE BEHIND EVERY ANSWER

If you remember nothing else from this appendix, remember this: speaking improves by speaking. Not by reading about speaking. Not by watching videos about speaking. Not by buying a better course. Every doubt below has the same root cure—more time with your mouth open, producing English. When in doubt, talk.

## Problems While Practicing

### **I feel stupid talking to myself. How can I practice with no partner?**

Everyone feels strange at first—then they stop noticing, usually within a week. Talking to yourself is not crazy; it is rehearsal, and athletes, actors, and musicians all do it. You do not need a partner to build the muscle. Narrate your morning: "I am making tea, the water is hot, where is my cup." Describe what you see on the street. Argue both sides of a question out loud. Explain your day to the mirror. Record a one-minute voice memo answering "What did I do today?" The privacy is a gift—you can make every mistake with zero embarrassment. By the time you reach a real person, your mouth already knows the moves.

### **Won't speaking fast with mistakes make my English worse and fossilize my errors?**

This is the fear that keeps thousands of learners silent, so let us answer it plainly. No—speaking with mistakes does not ruin your English. Fossilization is real, but it comes from never noticing and never correcting over many years, not from a few weeks of bold practice. You are still listening, reading, and reviewing chunks at the same time; that input constantly nudges your output toward correct forms. The far bigger danger is the opposite: staying silent to avoid mistakes, so you never build fluency at all. Speak fast now, let errors happen, and clean them up gradually. Fluency first, accuracy after. A confident speaker with small mistakes will always outperform a perfect speaker who never speaks.

## Should I fix grammar or just keep talking?

Keep talking—and fix grammar lightly, in second place. The order matters. In the moment of speaking, do not stop to check tenses; let the words flow and stay understood. After you finish, when you review a recording or notice a repeated slip, then fix it gently. Learn just enough grammar to be clear: tenses for time, basic word order, simple connectors. You do not need to master conditionals before you can chat about your weekend. Grammar is the polish on a sentence you can already say, not a gate you must pass before speaking.

## I understand everything but I can't speak. Why?

Because understanding and speaking are two different skills, trained in different ways. Listening and reading are *input*—your brain recognizes meaning. Speaking is *output*—your mouth and brain must produce and arrange words fast, under pressure. You have built a huge input muscle and a tiny output muscle. The fix is not more listening; you already have plenty. The fix is to flip the ratio: spend real time producing. Every chunk you can recognize must be practiced coming *out* of you, in sentences, out loud, until it is automatic. Speaking is a physical skill, like swimming. You cannot learn it by watching.

## How do I know if I'm actually improving?

Measure it, because feelings lie—some days you feel fluent, some days hopeless, and neither is accurate. Use real markers. The stopwatch is your honest judge: count how many words you say in one minute today versus last month; the number climbs. Record yourself monthly answering the same question, then compare the two recordings—you will hear the difference clearly. Track how long you can talk before freezing. Notice how often you reach for a word and find it. Improvement in speaking is slow day to day but obvious month to month, the way a child's height is. Keep your numbers and recordings; they will prove what your mood denies.

## Speaking with People

## **I freeze in real conversations even though solo practice is fine. Help.**

This is normal, and it does not mean your practice failed—it means you have not yet practiced under pressure. Solo practice is calm; a real person adds nerves, speed, and fear of judgment. Bridge the gap in steps. First, prepare survival phrases so cold that they fall out automatically: "Sorry, can you repeat that?", "How do you say...?", "Give me a second." When you freeze, you reach for these and buy time instead of panicking. Second, start with low-stakes humans—a friendly cashier, a language partner online, one patient friend. Third, give yourself permission to be slow and imperfect. The freeze melts with reps. Each real conversation makes the next one easier. There is no shortcut around doing it; there is only doing it more.

## **I'm shy or have social anxiety. How do I practice speaking with people?**

Gently, and you do not have to leap into crowds. Build a ladder from easiest to hardest and climb one rung at a time. The bottom rungs need no people at all: talk to yourself, record voice memos, shadow audio. Next, type-then-speak with an online partner so you control the pace. Then short voice calls with one kind person. Then a real face-to-face chat. Stay on each rung until it feels boring, then move up. Two more things help: remember that the other person is focused on the conversation, not grading your grammar; and remember that almost everyone is too worried about themselves to judge you. Anxiety shrinks with exposure—small, repeated, survivable doses.

## **My accent is strong. Is that a problem?**

Almost certainly not. Nearly every fluent speaker on earth has an accent, and accents are not errors—they are part of who you are. The real goal is to be *understood*, not to sound like a news anchor. Focus your effort on the sounds that change meaning and the stress and rhythm that carry it, not on erasing your origin. Clear beats native every time. If people understand you, your accent is doing its job. Spend your energy on speaking more, not on sounding less like yourself. Many learners chase a "perfect" accent for years

and stay silent the whole time—a bad trade. Be clear, be confident, keep your voice.

## **Doubts & Worries**

### **Is it too late to learn at my age?**

No. The "children learn languages better" idea is mostly a myth for what you actually need. Adults learn faster in important ways: you already understand grammar, you can study on purpose, you have discipline a child lacks, and you know exactly why you want this. Yes, a young child may end up with a more native accent—but you do not need a native accent; you need to communicate. People learn to speak English well at thirty, fifty, and seventy. Your age is not the obstacle. The only thing that decides your outcome is whether you practice. Start today and your future self will thank you.

### **How do I stay motivated, and what if I miss days?**

First, the honest truth: motivation is unreliable. It comes and goes, and a method built on feeling inspired will fail. Build on habit instead. Attach practice to something you already do daily—speak English while you make coffee, walk, or commute. Keep the daily minimum tiny so that even on bad days you can do it; ten minutes is hard to refuse. Track your streak and your word counts so you can see progress, because visible progress fuels you when motivation does not.

And when you miss a day—because you will—do not quit. Missing one day is nothing. The danger is the spiral of guilt that turns one missed day into a missed month. The rule is simple: never miss twice. Skipped yesterday? Just do today, even a tiny version. Consistency does not mean perfection; it means you always come back. The learners who succeed are not the ones who never miss. They are the ones who always return.

### **I keep forgetting words right when I need them. Is something wrong with me?**

Nothing is wrong with you—this happens to everyone, including in your own language. The cure is two-part. First, space your reviews: revisit chunks at growing intervals so they move into long-term memory instead of leaking out. Second, and more important, practice *retrieving* words by speaking, not just recognizing them by reading. A word you have only seen is hard to summon; a word you have said in twenty sentences comes when called. Learn whole chunks, not lonely words—"make a decision," not just "decision"—so the word arrives with its friends. Forgetting is part of learning, not a sign of failure.

### **Everyone else seems to learn faster than me. Should I give up?**

No, and the comparison is poisoning you. You see other people's results, never their hidden hours, their years abroad, their daily grind. You are comparing your messy inside to their polished outside. It is not a fair fight, and it does not matter anyway—their progress takes nothing from yours. The only useful comparison is you today versus you last month, and that comparison you control completely. Keep your stopwatch counts and your monthly recordings; race yourself. Slow progress is still progress, and the learner who keeps going at a slow pace beats the fast starter who quits. Do not give up. Compete only with yesterday's you.

### **REMEMBER THIS**

- Every doubt has one cure: speak more, today, before you feel ready.
- Understanding is not speaking—train output by producing English out loud, not by more listening.
- Mistakes do not ruin you; silence does. Fluency first, accuracy after.
- Aim to be understood, not perfect. Your accent is fine; your clarity is what counts.
- Ten honest minutes a day for ninety days beats long sessions once a week.
- It is never too late, and you are not behind. Compare yourself only to yesterday's you.
- Never miss twice. Motivation fades; habit and returning always win.

## REFERENCE

# Glossary

*The words used in this book, in plain English.*

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**A** quick reference to the key terms in this book. Where a term is a technique, the chapter that explains it is noted in parentheses.

### Active vocabulary

Words you can actually *use* when you speak—not just recognize. Speaking needs active vocabulary, which you build by saying words out loud, not only reading them. (Chapter 10)

### CEFR

The Common European Framework of Reference—a scale of six English levels: A1 (beginner), A2 (elementary), B1 (intermediate), B2 (upper-intermediate), C1 and C2 (advanced). This book aims to take you from about A2 to B2. (Chapter 18)

### Chunk

A ready-made group of words that goes together, like “to be honest” or “make a decision.” Fluent speakers use chunks instead of building every sentence word by word. (Chapter 11)

### Collocation

Words that naturally go together in English, such as “heavy rain” or “take a break.” Learning the whole pair sounds more natural than learning the words alone. (Chapter 11)

### Filler

A small word or phrase that keeps you talking while you think—like “well...”, “you know”, or “let me think.” Fillers help you avoid long, silent pauses. (Chapters 13 and 16)

## **Fluency**

Speaking smoothly and freely, with good flow—even if you make mistakes. This book builds fluency first and polishes accuracy later. (Chapter 4)

## **Accuracy**

Speaking correctly—right grammar, right words. It matters, but it comes *after* fluency, not before it. (Chapters 4 and 14)

## **Forgetting curve**

The way new information fades fast from memory—up to 80% gone within 48 hours—unless you review or use it. Spaced review defeats it. (Chapter 3)

## **Shadowing**

Listening to a short clip of English and speaking along with it at the same time, copying the speaker's rhythm and sound. A powerful solo exercise. (Chapters 8 and 12)

## **Spaced repetition**

Reviewing something at growing gaps in time—today, tomorrow, in a few days, in a week—so it stays in your memory for good. (Chapters 3 and 10)

## **The Stopwatch Method**

The signature exercise of this book: time yourself speaking out loud for 60 seconds, count your words, write the number down, and try to beat your record next time. By chasing speed, you stop translating. (Chapter 5)

## **The five rules of bold speaking**

A checklist to make your speech confident and flowing: speak faster, express emotion, speak louder, be accurate enough, and avoid long pauses. (Chapter 13)

## **Translation trap**

The habit of silently translating from your first language into English before you speak. It makes you slow and tired. The cure is removing the time to do it. (Chapter 2)

### **Words per minute (WPM)**

How many words you speak in one minute—your main progress number. Most learners start near 40–50 and pass 90 with daily practice. (Chapters 5 and 9)

## AFTERWORD

# About the Author

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**A**slan Mømmədli is a language educator and the founder of the speaking-first method behind this book. Over six years, working with more than 8,000 students, he developed a simple but powerful idea: that people learn to speak by speaking—fast, often, and without fear—not by collecting more rules. The Stopwatch Method, the daily sprint, and the five rules of bold speaking all grew out of that work, watching ordinary learners go from frozen silence to confident conversation in a matter of months.

He wrote this book for the millions of people who have studied English for years and still can't say what they mean—not because they lack ability, but because no one ever taught them that speaking is a skill to be trained, like a sport. His companion book for teachers, *The Fluency Stopwatch*, brings the same method to the classroom.

He leads **Enverson AI**, where he works on making confident speaking practice available to anyone, anywhere—using technology to give every learner more chances to open their mouth, while keeping the human heart of learning at the center.



Questions, stories of your progress, or just want to say hello in English?

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*“You don't learn to speak and then talk.  
You talk—and that is how you learn to  
speak.”*

Now close this book and go say something out loud.

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