

# Speaking English Practice

## SPEAKING ENGLISH OUR CONCERNS!



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### Don't study grammar too much

This rule might sound strange to many ESL students, but it is one of the most important rules. If you want to pass examinations, then study grammar. However, if you want to become fluent in English, then you should try to learn English without studying the grammar.

Studying grammar will only slow you down and confuse you. You will think about the rules when creating sentences instead of naturally saying a sentence like a native. Remember that only a small fraction of English speakers know more than 20% of all the grammar rules. Many ESL students know more grammar than native speakers. I can confidently say this with experience. I am a native English speaker, majored in English Literature, and have been teaching English for more than 10 years. However, many of my students know more details about English grammar than I do. I can easily look up the definition and apply it, but I don't know it off the top of my head.

I often ask my native English friends some grammar questions, and only a few of them know the correct answer. However, they are fluent in English and can read, speak, listen, and communicate effectively.

Do you want to be able to recite the definition of a causative verb, or do you want to be able to speak English fluently?

## Learn and study phrases

Many students learn vocabulary and try to put many words together to create a proper sentence. It amazes me how many words some of my students know, but they cannot create a proper sentence. The reason is because they didn't study phrases. When children learn a language, they learn both words and phrases together. Likewise, you need to study and learn phrases.

If you know 1000 words, you might not be able to say one correct sentence. But if you know 1 phrase, you can make hundreds of correct sentences. If you know 100 phrases, you will be surprised at how many correct sentences you will be able to say. Finally, when you know only a 1000 phrases, you will be almost a fluent English speaker.

The English Speaking Basics section is a great example of making numerous sentences with a single phrase. So don't spend hours and hours learning many different words. Use that time to study phrases instead and you will be closer to English fluency.

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### *Don't translate*

*When you want to create an English sentence, do not translate the words from your Mother tongue. The order of words is probably completely different and you will be both slow and incorrect by doing this. Instead, learn phrases and sentences so you don't have to think about the words you are saying. It should be automatic.*

*Another problem with translating is that you will be trying to incorporate grammar rules that you have learned. Translating and thinking about the grammar to create English sentences is incorrect and should be avoided.*

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## **Reading and Listening is NOT enough. Practice Speaking what you hear!**

Reading, listening, and speaking are the most important aspects of any language. The same is true for English. However, speaking is the only requirement to be fluent. It is normal for babies and children to learn speaking first, become fluent, then start reading, then writing. So the natural order is listening, speaking, reading, then writing.

### First Problem

Isn't it strange that schools across the world teach reading first, then writing, then listening, and finally speaking? Although it is different, the main reason is because when you learn a second language, you need to read material to understand and learn it. So even though the natural order is listening, speaking, reading, then writing, the order for ESL students is reading, listening, speaking, then writing.

### Second Problem

The reason many people can read and listen is because that's all they practice. But in order to speak English fluently, you need to practice speaking. Don't stop at the listening portion, and when you study, don't just listen. Speak out loud the material you are listening to and practice what you hear. Practice speaking out loud until your mouth and brain can do it without any effort. By doing so, you will be able to speak English fluently.



## **Study correct material**

A common phrase that is incorrect is, "Practice makes perfect." This is far from the truth. Practice only makes what you are practicing permanent. If you practice the incorrect sentence, you will have perfected saying the sentence incorrectly. Therefore, it is important that you study material that is commonly used by most people.

Another problem I see is that many students study the news. However, the language they speak is more formal and the content they use is more political and not used in regular life. It is important to understand what they are saying, but this is more of an advanced lesson that should be studied after learning the fundamental basics of English.

Studying English with a friend who is not a native English speaker is both good and bad. You should be aware of the pros and cons of speaking with a non native speaking friend. Practicing with a non native person will give you practice. You can also motivate each other and point out basic mistakes. But you might pick up bad habits from one another if you are not sure about what are correct and incorrect sentences. So use these practice times as a time period to practice the correct material you studied. Not to learn how to say a sentence.

In short, study English material that you can trust, that is commonly used, and that is correct.

