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| Welcome to EnglishClass101.com’s English in Three Minutes. The fastest, easiest, and most fun way to learn English. | |
| Hey everyone, I’m Alisha! | |
| In this series, we’re going to learn some easy ways to ask and answer common questions in English. It’s really useful, and it only takes three minutes! | |
| In the final lesson in this series, you’re going to learn some of the things that native speakers say to make your English sound perfectly fluent! | |
| So this is the last English in Three Minutes lesson for this series... I hope you’ve learned a lot! In this lesson we’re going to look at some words that are a feature of spontaneous, fluent English speech: they’re known as “filler words”. | |
| You probably have these in your native language too: words that don’t have any meaning, but that fill a pause in the conversation while you think about what to say next. You may not even be aware you’re using them in your native language. However, one of the quickest ways to remind the person you’re speaking to that you’re not a native speaker of English is to slip back into using one of these “filler words” in your native language. | |
| So now we’re going to introduce a few of these common filler words in English. You will hear these a lot when you’re speaking to native English speakers, but this doesn’t mean you should use them all the time yourself - just sometimes is more than enough to make your speech sound fluent and natural! Using these too much can sound very irritating. | |
| Some examples of “filler words” are sounds, like: | |
| “Um...” | |
| “Er...” | |
| “Uh...” | |
| So using these in a sentence would sound like: | |
| “I’m going to, um, Florida this weekend.” | |
| But we also have actual words and phrases that serve as “filler words”. Some of the most widely-used are: | |
| “Y’know...” | |
| “Actually...” | |
| “Basically...” | |
| “I guess...” | |
| “Of course...” | |
| “If you know what I mean...” | |
| And so on and so on! However, the most over-used “filler word” is, without a doubt, “like”. | |
| “Hey, that’s, like, a really nice haircut!” | |
| “She’s like, such a cool person!” | |
| This usage of “like” has absolutely no meaning! You will hear it a lot, especially if you’re speaking to younger people, but you should try to avoid over-using it, as it can make your speech sound sloppy and uneducated. | |
| But there’s actually another use of “like” which you may not be aware of. It’s used to quote speech in conversation. In your grammar textbook, you probably had some sample sentences like this: | |
| “He told me that he was going to see a movie this weekend.” | |
| Or: |  |
| “He said he was going to see a movie this weekend.” | |
| Or: |  |
| “He said, ‘I’m going to see a movie this weekend’.” | |
| But I’ll tell you a secret: | it is very, very common for younger native English speakers to quote using the phrase “was like~”. |
| For example: |  |
| “He was like ‘I’m going to see a movie this weekend’.” | |
| To expand this further, you might even overhear something like this... | |
| “He was like, I’m going to see a movie this weekend, do you wanna come, and I was like, I dunno, I’m kinda busy, and he was like OK, maybe next time.” | |
| Did you follow all that?! | |
| Now, I’m NOT suggesting you copy this way of speaking exactly... but just be aware that “he was like... and I was like” is a very common if slightly lazy way of quoting speech in modern English, and throwing in a “he was like... and I was like...” every now and then will make you sound like a totally fluent young native English speaker! | |
| Now it’s time for Alisha’s Advice! | |
| I said that these “filler words” don’t mean anything, and that they can sound annoying when you use them too much, but actually they can have an important function. As well as giving you time to decide what to say next, they also help you to keep your turn when speaking, as opposed to going quiet and possibly allowing someone else to jump in and start talking. They can also weaken or soften what you’re saying, which can work either positively or negatively. If you’re saying something important that you want people to take seriously, you should try to avoid using fillers, but if you’re telling someone something difficult, or if you’re expressing some strong feeling, it might be good to add in a “like” or “you know”. | |
| For example. | |
| “I’m worried about you” sounds very serious and heavy, while “I’m, you know, worried about you” sounds much gentler and less heavy | |
| On the other hand, adding a “you know” at the end of a sentence can actually underline and strengthen what you’re saying, as in: | |
| “I’m worried about you, you know.” | |
| And that's it! You've learned a lot of natural English in the last 25 lessons, but that doesn't mean you're done learning! For more English resources, tips, lessons and tools visit EnglishClass101.com! I'll see you later! | |