FluentU English Language and Culture Blog

Want to speak English naturally?

by MICHAEL CRISTIANO

Can I Learn English Myself? How to Successfully Teach Yourself English

Meditating in your bedroom.

Reading an exciting book.

Sitting on the couch with a cup of tea and listening to the rain.

Some of the best things can be done by yourself.

So, what about learning English?

We always hear about people taking classes or courses or hiring expensive private teachers or tutors to master the English language, but is there a way to do it on your own?

Let's look at this question, and if it is possible to learn English by yourself, let's find out how.

Page Contents

1. Can you learn English by yourself?
2. What are the benefits of teaching yourself English?
3. How to set goals for learning English
4. How to measure your progress in English
5. How to stay motivated to learn English
6. What tools do you need to teach yourself English?
    6.1. Online tools
    6.2. Offline tools
7. How can you do English language immersion at hon
8. How do I teach myself to speak English?
9. How to teach yourself English step-by-step
    9.1. Step 1: Find out your English level.
    9.2. Step 2: Come up with a study plan.
    9.3. Step 3: Gather your resources.
    9.4. Step 4: Create a routine.
    9.5. Step 5: Dive in!
10. How to make an English study plan
    10.1. Do you need a study plan?
    10.2. How to tailor the study plan to your needs
    10.3. A sample study plan

Download: *This blog post is available as a convenient and portable PDF that you can take anywhere. Click here to get a copy. (Download)*

Can you learn English by yourself?

If you're reading this blog post, chances are you've already asked yourself this question.

So, is it really possible to learn and master English by yourself?

The answer is a solid "yes!"

In modern-day times, **the internet is an English learner's best friend!** Before the internet existed, the options for learning English were limited: You either had to take a

class with a teacher or you had to buy an English textbook from a bookstore and complete it on your own.

That has all changed! With the internet, the options are limitless. **As an English learner, you can access ebooks, smartphone apps, self-guided courses, YouTube videos and so much more.**

Learning English is easier and more accessible now than at any other time in human history.

The best part is that all types of English learners can find resources that suit them on the internet. Do you learn best by listening? How about by writing and reading? Either way, you have many options to explore to find the best English learning method for you.

In addition to the power of the internet, **learning English is easy because it's spoken everywhere in the world.** How many countries speak English, you ask? Well, that number may be as high as 70!

Besides, even in a place where English isn't spoken by the majority of people, English speakers can be found in virtually every country and every city on Earth.

Further, learning English by yourself is easy for adults and even teenagers! While there are benefits to learning English as a child in school, adults and teenagers, especially those with clearly defined goals, can excel at learning English by themselves.

You should ask yourself, "Why learn English?"

Do you need to learn English for travelers? Are you moving to an English-speaking country? Do you need English for work? What is academic English even, and why do you need it to attend a school or university?

There are a lot of reasons for learning English, but what matters is that it's completely possible to do it by yourself!

What are the benefits of teaching yourself English?

While it may seem that teaching yourself English is a lot of work in comparison to attending a class, there are actually quite a few benefits to doing it on your own.

First of all, teaching yourself English means you get to choose how much time and at what time you want to study. Do you prefer studying in the early mornings or late evenings? Can you only study on weekends? Can you only study for 20 minutes at a time per day? Well, teaching yourself English means you have complete control: **You can have a flexible schedule and flexible time commitment,** and you can change these things whenever you want.

Self-studying English is also more affordable than using structured courses and programs. Some university classes can cost thousands of dollars, and even informal classes in the community aren't cheap. If you teach English to yourself, you can drastically cut your costs and only buy the materials you know will work for you.

Speaking of that, **if you find that something isn't working for you, you have the ability to change it whenever you want.** Let's say you find that an app or a self-guided online course isn't working; oftentimes, you can ask for a refund and try something new!

This is because teaching yourself English means you never have to be bored! You have the ability to choose whatever engaging and exciting materials you want, and **you can also pick and choose what to study to reach your personal goals**.

Don't want to learn business vocabulary because you only plan to travel to an English-speaking country?

If you're teaching yourself English, you can skip it without any guilt.

How to set goals for learning English

Now that we know that teaching yourself English is not only possible but also beneficial, we need to make a plan.

And the best way to make a plan is to map out some goals.

Firstly, you should write your goals down. This makes your goals real. In fact, you'll need to constantly make sure you're making progress toward these goals by self-assessing, and writing them down means that you can always refer back to them.

Next, I recommend making smaller goals rather than a single large goal. That's because large goals can be intimidating: They may seem so big that you'll never achieve them.

For example, rather than make a goal like *I'll understand every word I read in the first "Harry Potter" novel,* try one that's smaller and more attainable. Instead, maybe make your goal *I will understand the majority of what I read in the "Harry Potter" novel, enough so that I won't need to constantly look things up in a dictionary.*

To make goals more manageable, I **recommend the SMART goal method** for English immersion at home. SMART stands for five words: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely.

Let's look at our goal of reading and understanding the majority of "Harry Potter" again, and let's frame it through the SMART goal method:

How to measure your progress in English

When learning English by yourself, making a goal is half the battle. The second half is making sure you're reaching that goal.

To do that, you're going to need ways to measure your progress in English. This can be done quite easily and in a variety of ways.

For example, you can **check your progress by keeping a daily journal.** A daily journal could be about anything you'd like, but it should be completely in English. Your journal entries could include a log of what activities or study tasks you do every day, as well as what's happening in your everyday life. Allow yourself to be creative! Over time, you'll notice how your writing style changes and improves as you use more complex vocabulary and master English grammar constructions.

You could do the same exercise by **recording yourself speaking via video or audio recording.** This would also allow you to look back at previous recordings and see how you've progressed as you learn more and more. If you're not happy with your speaking, you could always try an English pronunciation app that'll have many different exercises for practicing.

Another way to measure your progress in English is by **giving yourself regular tests.** These can be built into the materials you're already using. For example, many free English learning apps, as well as the best books to learn English, have tests as part of their English learning program.

Otherwise, you could **make regular English tests for yourself.** An example of this could be to read an English text and calculate what percentage of words you know. Over time, you could repeat this test, and you'll find that your percentage of known words should increase as you learn more and more words.

Want to know generally how much English you know? You can also **use an online English level test** to check your proficiency.

How to stay motivated to learn English

Perhaps the biggest threat to learning English by yourself is motivation.

In other words, to be successful, you'll need to study and practice English regularly over the course of

months or years, and if you don't want to do it, it won't happen and you won't progress.

So, how do you stay motivated over a long period of time?

There are many strategies you can use.

First of all, you should make a schedule and stick to it. Again, this schedule could be flexible and change every week, but you should plan out time that's specifically for studying English. Keep in mind, it's always better to study in short sessions very often than to do a long study session only once a week.

Next, you'll want to make the most of your downtime. Downtime means the period of time during the day when you're not really doing anything else like working, studying or spending time with family and friends. For example, instead of watching TV for two hours every evening after dinner, you could use that time to study English. You could even use a couple of hours on the weekend. You'll progress much faster that way, which will keep you excited about the process.

I also recommend using a variety of learning materials. This helps to make sure you don't get bored because boredom really is the killer of motivation. A variety of learning materials should include things that target different skills.

> *"The way to stay inspired and motivated is by doing what you like, doing what you love." - Raphael Saadiq*

For example, if you learn English with YouTube or learn English with short movies, you're targeting listening skills. If you have the best English app downloads, you can play memory games. If you have an English course book, you can improve your reading and writing skills.

While it's easy to target listening, reading and writing skills, if you don't live with English speakers, it may be hard to practice speaking. For that, you'll need to find a learning buddy. A learning buddy can be a native

English speaker or a fellow English learner. Together, you can practice English by speaking about things that interest you both, and you can motivate each other to keep up with your English goals.

Don't know where to find a learning buddy? Do a Google search. With the internet, you can even learn English on Discord!

Lastly, and as we mentioned in the previous section, **keep track of your progress**. Not only will this help you make sure you're reaching your goals, but it'll help you inspire yourself when you're feeling down or stuck at a certain level of English. Keeping track of your progress lets you know how far you've come!

What tools do you need to teach yourself English?

We've talked a lot about goal setting and measuring our success, but what are the actual tools you're going to use to teach yourself English?

Check out the online and offline tools you'll need to succeed.

Online tools

- **Apps:** Apps for your smartphone are very useful to teach yourself English. Whether it's one that uses a game or one that's purely educational, the best apps for learning English are a must.
- **Online Courses:** Many online courses are great for learning English on your own. Without an actual teacher, these free online English courses are self-paced, meaning you can go as fast or as slow as you'd like.
- **Online Dictionaries:** Online dictionaries or even the best English dictionary apps are a great way to look up a word you don't understand and get it translated into your native language. I don't read

anything online without an online dictionary opened up on my internet browser!

- **YouTube Channels:** Getting your listening practice and video tutorials has never been easier! You can learn English easily on YouTube at any level.
- **Language Exchange Websites:** Remember how important speaking English is to your progress? You can practice English speaking online and find an English speaking partner on language exchange websites.

Offline tools

- **English Practice Groups:** Even though you are planning to self-study English, it doesn't mean you have to do it completely alone. In many cities around the world, there are often groups of people who meet up at a certain time every week for the purpose of practicing English. These conversation groups can easily be found through Google, the newspaper or on community webpages.
- **Dictionaries:** Online dictionaries can be a little short on the details, so a detailed, offline dictionary is a great addition. I recommend two types of dictionaries. The first should be *monolingual* and consist of only English words and definitions in English. The second dictionary should be *bilingual* and feature two languages: English as well as translations into your native language. There are also many English dictionaries for android that offer an offline mode.
- **Grammar Guides:** Grammar guides are English grammar reference books that allow you to get detailed explanations of grammar points as well as loads of practice exercises.
- **Flashcards:** Flashcards can be used for practicing English spelling, vocabulary and grammar constructions. You can create physical flashcards or use an English flashcards app.
- **Notebooks:** Taking your own notes is important when learning English. Having a notebook, whether physically or digitally, is great for writing down new vocabulary words and explaining grammar points in your own words.

How can you do English language immersion at home?

If you want to know how to learn English at home in the best way possible, I suggest immersion.

Immersion is the act of surrounding yourself in a language in order to learn it more effectively. Immersion can be done by moving to an English-speaking country or city, but you can also do English immersion at home all by yourself. Here's how!

One of the best ways to surround yourself with English is to surround yourself physically. This means **covering your home in labels** or Post-it Notes. Simply write the names of objects, furniture pieces and places on Post-it Notes and put them around the room so that every time you use that object or go into that room, you'll see its name on a Post-it Note or label.

You can also **use a computer program** to complete your at-home immersion. With English software immersion, you can follow a self-guided course that teaches you English by transporting you to an English-speaking place.

Another easy way to get at-home English immersion is to **take aspects of your daily life and do them in English**. In fact, this is probably the most fun way to achieve immersion.

For example, do you love the news? Simply learn English news by watching or reading it in English.

What about music? You can do that in English as well! It's easy—and enjoyable—to learn English with music.

You can also learn English with Netflix, learn English with TV and learn English with films. If you prefer to watch viral videos, may I also suggest that you learn English on YouTube. The options are limitless!

But don't just surround yourself with Post-it Notes and media in English. Try meeting some real English-speaking people! Making English friends is a great way to practice English and have a great time.

How do I teach myself to speak English?

One skill that's often ignored when learning English by yourself is actually speaking it. So much time is spent on reading, writing and listening to English that we almost forget to actually speak. Lucky for you, it's easy to figure out how to learn English by speaking at home.

Firstly, you should choose an English accent and stick to it. English is spoken by so many people around the world that there are different accents depending on which region they come from.

I recommend one of the two big accents: You can learn British English speaking, or you can learn the American English accent. There are, of course, other accents, such as Australian English, Canadian English and South

African English, but unless you plan to live or travel to these places extensively, I wouldn't choose these accents.

Next, you should listen to a lot of English. English listening practice is a fantastic way to get the sounds and the structures of the English language deep in your brain, which will make your speaking soar.

But don't rely just on listening. I'll say it again: You need to actually speak English.

There are many ways when it comes to how to improve spoken English. Some can be done completely on your own. For example, you can use an app that has voice recognition, allowing you to match your pronunciation to a native English speaker. You could also record yourself and listen, comparing your pronunciation to other recordings of English you've heard.

Above all, you should aim to speak with a native English speaker. This will be the best and fastest way to improve your speaking.

How to teach yourself English step-by-step

All the tips in the world won't replace a roadmap. Let's now look at a step-by-step method for teaching yourself English.

Step 1: Find out your English level.

Whether you know a lot of English, a little English or no English at all, it's important to know what your current English language skills are. This'll determine what you already know, what you need to learn and how much you need to learn to reach your goals.

I would suggest an online English level test, also known as an English proficiency test.

Step 2: Come up with a study plan.

A study plan is basically a map of how you'll learn the English language.

In other words, it'll address how long you want the process to take and how much time you can commit per day or per week.

But don't just write down your daily or weekly time commitments. Instead, create a plan for what you'll do during each study session. You can plan months in advance or create the details of the plan as you go, but you should have a pretty good idea of what direction you're heading in.

If you're using a self-study course, a textbook or an app that's divided into sections, structuring your study plan is easy. Simply decide how many chapters or sections you want to complete per week and you're ready to go!

Step 3: Gather your resources.

Part of having a structured plan is having all of your resources chosen and ready to go.

Remember that using multiple resources keeps things interesting and keeps you engaged.

At the very least, you should have a resource that focuses on each area of language learning. That means that you account for all skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar. You can use one resource that addresses multiple skills, but no skill should be forgotten.

Step 4: Create a routine.

Having a routine and sticking to it is essential to succeed in learning English on your own.

Use your SMART goals to create a daily or weekly plan that you do effortlessly and effectively.

Step 5: Dive in!

Take the plunge!

Don't get too obsessed with creating the perfect plan. Your plan will change as you go, so the important part is to get started.

How to make an English study plan

Do you need a study plan?

Simply, yes, you'll need an English study plan. It doesn't have to be a full syllabus like the course outline you'd see for a university course, but it should have some details about what you'll do and how you'll do it.

Namely, a study plan will keep you on track and help you keep your long-term goals in mind. As mentioned many times before, however, your study plan can always change with new goals and changing needs.

How to tailor the study plan to your needs

Tailoring your study plan to your needs means making sure your study plan will actually accomplish your goals for learning English.

To do this, you will first need to keep your SMART goals in mind and make sure each part of your study plan works toward accomplishing those goals. For example, if your plan is to improve your reading, your study plan should have activities related to reading: learning new vocabulary via flashcards, reading texts and writing summaries, doing grammar exercises, etc.

Further, you can tailor your study plan to your needs by knowing how you learn best. By knowing whether you learn best by listening, doing or reading, you can customize your study plan with the right English tools.

Lastly, make sure you have fun! Everybody needs fun in their study routine, so learning English by yourself shouldn't be a chore. One way to have fun is by using exciting content in your study plan. Try checking out a program like FluentU.

FluentU takes real-world videos—like music videos, movie trailers, news and inspiring talks—and turns them into personalized language learning lessons.

Learning with movies, music, television and other cool content definitely checks the box for fun!

A sample study plan

Are you a little nervous about creating a study plan? There's no need to be!

Check out this sample study plan for your first week of self-studying. For our purposes, we'll pretend that you have no knowledge of the English Language.

SAMPLE ENGLISH STUDY PLAN

FluentU

Here's a sample study plan that you can use for your first week of learning English! This plan is for learners who are teaching themselves English using a variety of self-study methods and online tools.

MONDAY

(Morning) English vocabulary and pronunciation: Start an English course on an app such as Duolingo, Memrise or Mango Languages. Watch videos on FluentU about English pronunciation.

(Early Afternoon) English vocabulary and pronunciation: On your lunch break, review or "level up" previously done English content on app course. Rewatch videos on FluentU about English pronunciation and practice with FluentU flashcards.

(Late Afternoon) Listening practice: Listen to an English podcast, the news or watch a couple YouTube videos in English.

(Evening) Textbook work: Use your English textbook, grammar guide or self-directed course. Aim to complete one full chapter or section. Take notes on grammar and new vocabulary and do the practice exercises.

TUESDAY

(Morning) English vocabulary and pronunciation: Continue with new modules of your English course app. Watch more videos on FluentU about English pronunciation.

(Early Afternoon) English vocabulary and pronunciation: On your lunch break, review or "level up" previously done English content on app course. Rewatch videos on FluentU about English pronunciation and practice with flashcards.

(Late Afternoon) Listening practice: Listen to an English podcast, the news or watch a couple YouTube videos in English.

(Evening) Textbook work: Review previous textbook or course notes on grammar and vocabulary. Use your English textbook, grammar guide or self-directed course. Takes notes on grammar and new vocabulary and do the practice exercises.

WEDNESDAY

(Morning) English vocabulary: Continue with new modules on your English course app. Watch more videos on FluentU. Learn greetings, basic sentence structures and common beginner vocabulary.

(Early Afternoon) English vocabulary: On your lunch break, review or "level up" previously done English content on app course. Rewatch videos on FluentU and practice with flashcards.

(Late Afternoon) Listening practice: Listen to an English podcast, the news or watch a couple YouTube videos in English.

(Evening) Speaking work: Meet with a speaking partner online or in-person and practice speaking. Prepare a plan beforehand so you have some idea of what you'll talk about.

THURSDAY

(Morning) English vocabulary: Continue with new modules on your English course app. Watch more videos on FluentU. Learn more greetings, basic sentence structures and common beginner vocabulary.

(Early Afternoon) English vocabulary: On your lunch break, review or "level up" previously done English content on app course. Rewatch videos on FluentU and practice with flashcards.

(Late Afternoon) Listening practice: Listen to an English podcast, the news or watch a couple YouTube videos in English.

(Evening) Textbook and writing work: Review previous textbook or course notes on grammar and vocabulary. Use your English textbook, grammar guide or self-directed course. Takes notes on grammar and new vocabulary and do the practice exercises. Do a short writing composition on an easy topic such as yourself and your family.

FRIDAY

(Morning) English vocabulary: Continue with new modules on your English course app. Watch more videos on FluentU. Learn some common verbs and more common vocabulary related to the house, the city, work and school.

SATURDAY

(Morning) Review and listening practice: Review or "level up" previously done English content on app course. Rewatch videos on FluentU and practice with flashcards. Listen to an English podcast, the news or watch a couple YouTube videos in English. Review previous textbook or course notes on grammar and

(Early Afternoon) English vocabulary: On your lunch break, review or "level up" previously done English content on app course. Rewatch videos on FluentU and practice with flashcards.

(Late Afternoon) Listening practice: Listen to an English podcast, the news or watch a couple YouTube videos in English.

(Evening) Relax! (Or get in some listening and speaking practice.): It's Friday. Take the night off. You could, however, also meet with some friends who speak English at a bar to practice speaking, or you could watch an English movie.

vocabulary. Do another writing composition on an easy topic such as your schooling, job or hobbies.

(Afternoon) Speaking work: Meet with a speaking partner online or in-person and practice speaking. Prepare a plan beforehand so you have some idea of what you'll talk about.

(Evening) Relax! (Or get in some listening and speaking practice.): It's Saturday. Take the night off. You could, however, also meet with some friends who speak English at a bar to practice speaking, or you could watch an English movie.

SUNDAY

(Morning) Textbook and writing work: Review previous notes on grammar and vocabulary. Use your English textbook, grammar guide or self-directed course. Takes notes on grammar and new vocabulary and do the practice exercises. Do a short writing composition on an easy topic such as yourself and your family.

(Evening) Review and listening practice: Review or "level up" previously done English content on app course. Rewatch videos on FluentU and practice with flashcards. Listen to an English podcast, the news or watch a couple YouTube videos in English.

Doing something on your own doesn't mean you have to be lonely! With all of these tips, tricks and resources, you're ready to master English all by yourself.

Download: *This blog post is available as a convenient and portable PDF that you can take anywhere. Click here to get a copy. (Download)*

...n a Language with Real World Videos

If you *liked* this post, something tells me that you'll *love* FluentU, the best way to learn English with real-world videos.

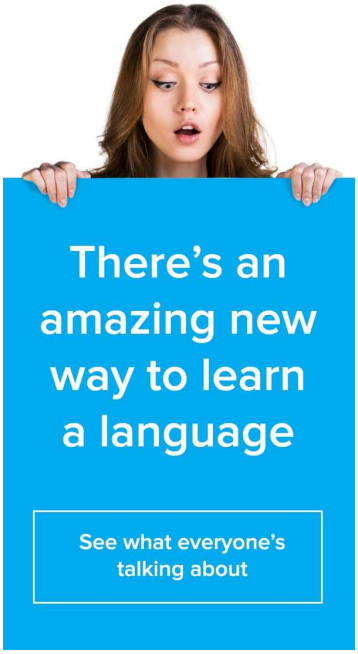
Experience English immersion online!

‹ How to Learn English with Music Videos and Songs: Tips and Tricks to Get Started
How to Use the English Past Continuous: The Only Guide You'll Ever Need ›

Did this article answer all of your questions? *

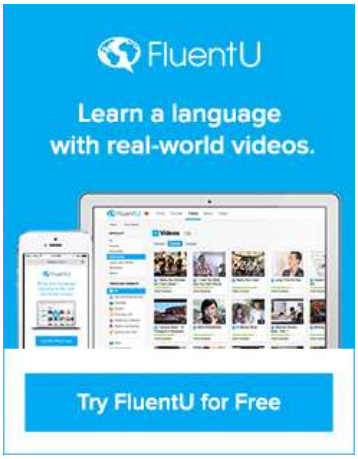
Yes No

Send



Search

Search...



Popular Posts

Learn English through Movies and Film: A Complete Guide
8 Great Tips to Learn English Through Songs and Music
9 Awesome Channels to Learn English on YouTube
How to Learn English Through the News
10 Best 90's Sitcoms for English Learners
12 English Podcasts Every English Learner Should Listen To
20 Essential American Slang Words for English Learners
20 Essential English Idioms for Sounding Like a Native

Categories

English Learning Resources
English Learning Tips
English Vocab and Grammar
FluentU

About FluentU

FluentU brings English to life with real-world videos. Learning English becomes fun and easy when you learn with movie trailers, music videos, news and inspiring talks.

Try FluentU for Free

FTC Disclosure

FluentU is a participant in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, an affiliate advertising program designed to provide a means for sites to earn advertising fees by advertising and linking to Amazon.com. Amazon and the Amazon logo are trademarks of Amazon.com, Inc, or its affiliates. We also participate in other affiliate advertising programs for products and services we believe in.

© 2020 Enux Education Limited. All Rights Reserved. Contact Us Follow Us