

# Introduction to English Study

## Developing English Listening Skills



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**stress** : the degree of force or loudness with which a word or part of a word is pronounced or a note in music is played, which makes it sound stronger than other parts, words or notes To add emphasize to a word or group of words so that they are noticed more.

**pragmatics** : the study of how words and phrases are used with special meanings in particular situations Without muscles we would be a big pile of bones!!

**muscle** : one of the pieces of flesh inside your body that you use in order to move, and that connect your bones together

**hesitation** : when someone pauses before saying or doing something because you are nervous or not sure People often hesitate when they lack confidence.

**context** : the situation, events, or information that are related to something and that help you to understand it Things that surround you  
tentative= uncertain and doubtful

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not sure; uncertain; have doubts and lack confidence



**Introduction to English Study #1—4 series** is specially designed for **tentative** beginners and those who **study English alone**.

We will give you suggestions on things you can do when by yourself.

The series discusses basic methods used in learning English as a foreign language, emphasizing the study of **Spoken English**, **English Reading**, **English Listening** and **Vocabulary**.

We recommend you complete this series before exploring the rest of our classes. Please sign up for ALL FOUR lessons.

For today, let's talk about **English Listening**.

There will be lots of suggestions on what you can do to improve in each of these areas.



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# What if?

It is possible that some of you do NOT  
UNDERSTAND what I am saying.



## What If I Can't Understand a Single Word?

Have you ever tried push-ups? If a person can only do one push-up at a time, does that mean their chest **muscles** are weak?

Not necessarily – it could mean that their other muscles are not strong enough. To do push-ups, you need to use a lot of different muscles: **chest muscles, abdominal** muscles, **arm** muscles etc. **You need to use your whole body to do push-ups.**



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# Push-ups and English listening



You can compare doing push-ups with listening to English. If you can't understand anything when you listen to English, it's fair to say that **the problem is not limited to Listening skills**.

Vocabulary, grammar and phonics are the basic "muscles" you need to develop to reinforce your listening skills. Let's have a look at some examples.

to make something stronger

the sounds and pronunciation of syllables and words

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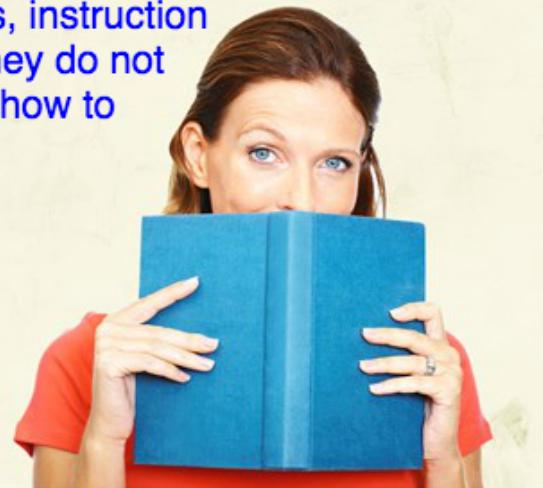
## Familiar vocabulary

There are many people who listen to English a lot, but they don't see the words that are being spoken. Perhaps they watch movies or listen to music.

**"It sounds familiar but I don't understand it."** Your vocabulary is weak. You can't pair what you hear with the meaning. You need to put more effort into developing your vocabulary.

**"It looks familiar but I don't understand it."** Your phonics are weak. The pronunciation that you remember is not the correct pronunciation. Your phonics need work.

There are many people who read English emails, instruction books, etc. and they understand a lot of it, but they do not know how to read it correctly. They are not sure how to pronounce the words they see.



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# Familiar vocabulary

When you get to this point, you are making LOTS of progress



**"It looks and sounds familiar but I don't understand it."**

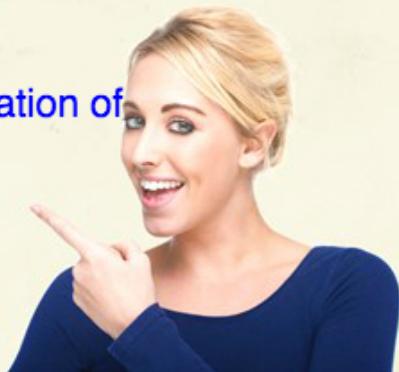
You have a problem with your grammar. Grammar is a set of rules that every single English word must follow. Using the correct grammar, we can build words into phrases, sentences, paragraphs and articles. Grammar makes what you hear meaningful and comprehensible.

understandable

words are like bones and grammar is like muscles; Just as we need muscles to hold our bones together, we need grammar to hold our words together.

yes, often not sure the pronounce of words=

Yes, that's true. They often do not know the pronunciation of the words.



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I can understand parts,  
but I don't understand the full meaning  
At this point, you are making GREAT PROGRESS!!



Now that you have developed your “muscles” you can understand parts of conversation, but you are still unclear about the full meaning. You may have issues with the following:

**Stress, Hesitation Fillers and Pragmatics.**

Grammar can connect the words together and make them meaningful



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When people speak quickly, you have to pay close attention **stress**. This way, you can grasp what's important, ignore what is not, and get the information you need. Normally, the most important information is stressed, making it sound louder. In comparison, less important information is unstressed and spoken more quietly. For instance, try reading the following sentence: [Try to identify which TWO words should be STRESSED.](#)

"It has been seen as the best show for the past ten years." [Listen to me read it with NO stress.](#)

In order for us to know which words should be stressed we need to have an idea about what is being discussed. We only have ONE SENTENCE from a longer conversation.



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- 1) shows/movies/concerts, etc.
- 2) a time period; a period of time/years
- 3) **which was the BEST**

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# Stress



The key information in this sentence is “best” and “ten”.

Now try re-reading the sentence as quickly as possible and stressing “best” and “ten”, while leaving the other words quieter: **There have been MANY shows over the past years, but in the opinion of many people, which show was the BEST? “It has been seen as the **best** show for the past **ten** years.”**

Paying close attention to stress when listening to English gives you the most important information in a sentence.



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# Hesitation Fillers

fill in empty space; Most people, instead of just being quiet for a few seconds while thinking, they just fill in the quiet time with meaningless words



We often use following terms in everyday conversation:  
I think...I believe...eh...you know...all right...I mean...well...

These are more like sounds, not words. They have almost no meaning.

These are **hesitation** fillers: the words people always say when they hesitate. These words are usually not important to the meaning of a sentence. Ignoring hesitation fillers gives you more time to think, enabling you to understand faster speech.

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# Pragmatics



**Pragmatics** is all about context. Any sentence, conversation or dialogue can be interpreted differently in different contexts.

For instance, try analyzing the following dialogue:

**A: I could eat the whole cake.**

**B: Oh, thanks.**

Why would B say: "Oh thanks"?

Let's look at some possible **contexts**.

There could be several meanings to this comment:  
"Oh thanks"



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# Possible contexts



## Possible context 1:

B bakes a cake. A admires the cake and makes a compliment:  
I could eat the whole cake. B replies: Oh thanks (for your kind  
compliment). Person B who baked the cake is very happy and appreciative  
that person A likes the cake a lot and is saying THANK YOU!

## Possible context 2:

A and B are having dinner together. At the end of the meal,  
they have a cake to share. B feels full but doesn't want to waste  
the food. A says: I could eat the whole cake. B replies:  
Oh thanks (for eating my half of the cake).

I am too full to eat anything else.  
Thank you for eating my half/share of the cake.



# Interpretations



**A: I could eat the whole cake.**

**B: Oh, thanks.**

There are many possible interpretations of the meaning of this conversation. So, we have to be **very clear of the context** if we want to fully understand a dialogue or conversation.

We need to remember what was said earlier (context).

We need to watch a person's gestures and body language carefully. This tells us what a person might be thinking and feeling.

Always remember it is NOT JUST WORDS that communicate thoughts and feelings.

It's HOW we say words, our gestures, body language as well as what has already been said and done.



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watch a person's face expression=

**We need to watch a person's facial expressions.**

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# Thank you

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*Don't forget to **leave your feedback** for this session.  
See you next time.*