**LISTENING IN ENGLISH**

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## [Secret Tips to Drastically Improve Your English Listening (ESL)](http://reallifeglobal.com/secret-tips-to-drastically-improve-your-english-listening-esl/)

February 27, 2013[Justin](http://reallifeglobal.com/author/justin/)[0 Comments](http://reallifeglobal.com/secret-tips-to-drastically-improve-your-english-listening-esl/#disqus_thread)[Uncategorized](http://reallifeglobal.com/category/uncategorized/)

[](http://reallifebh.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/secret-listening-tips-thumb.png)I know how you feel. You’ve studied English for a long time, you understand the rules, you can read, write, and even speak. But when you watch TV, listen to podcasts, or find yourself in a group of native speakers, YOU ARE TOTALLY LOST!

We speak too fast, we cut words, we use too much slang, and we break nearly all the grammar rules. This is not what you learned in school, and your English class will do little to help you develop this extremely important skill for fluency.

If this sounds like you, this article will reveal the best and most effective tips, strategies, and techniques to drastically improve your ESL listening ability. If you follow at least a few of them, these tips can dramatically improve your listening in a question of just a few weeks.

First of all, it’s important to note that listening difficulties are very common. What’s not common, however, is a proactive attitude, or good strategies to fix this. Fortunately, once you start consistently implementing these tips, your listening skills will improve faster than you ever imagined.

What a lot of frustrated learners don’t know, however, is that BECAUSE you are having this problem, it means that fluency is close. Learning to listen and understand native speakers in a relaxed, fun way is the biggest step you can take toward making English part of your life, and developing permanent lifelong fluency.

[**IMPROVE YOUR LISTENING WITH REALLIFE RADIO**](http://reallifebh.com/real-life-english-esl-podcasts)**|**

## Make Listening a Fun Daily Habit

“We are what we repeatedly do; excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.” – Aristotle

Whatever you do in life, to be awesome at it, you need to do it every day. I’m sorry, but twice a week is okay for amateurs, but most learners expect (and need) to be highly proficient.

For ESL learners who want and need permanent, life-long fluency, mediocrity is not an option.

The most effective, interesting, and convenient way to do this is to create a [lifestyle that transforms your contact with English into something convenient and enjoyable](http://reallifebh.com/rle-lifestyle-guide-5-ways-to-make-english-a-part-of-your-daily-life). Most of us live busy lives, and we value our free time, so to do it every day, we need good strategies, and we need to make them into habits.

Usually thirty days is enough to build a strong habit. These resources will help show you how to efficiently build habits: [How to Guarantee Language Learning Success (30 Day Trial)](http://reallifebh.com/30-day-trial)  | [Watch “30 Day Challenge” on TED (subtitles in all languages)](http://www.ted.com/talks/matt_cutts_try_something_new_for_30_days.html)

## Take advantage of convenient moments (transit, exercise, etc)

Whether you drive a car, take the bus, or walk, the most convenient time for you to practice your listening skills is usually in transit.

Everybody I talk to about this complains that they don’t have enough time to practice.  My response is always the same:  find convenient, easy moments to do it, and make them into fun, daily habits. No matter what your level is, you don’t have to be intently listening to learn. You just need to do it every day.

If you don’t understand, your mind and brain will adapt to the native rhythms pretty quickly, and you’ll soon start understanding and spontaneously using new words and speaking more like a native.

Besides transit time, here are a few convenient moments for most people:

* Getting ready in the morning
* Cooking/cleaning/organizing your house
* When you’re exercising

## Listen to native English speaking podcasts & online radio

The world is getting smaller every day, and technology is making it possible to be connected to every culture and language from your internet connection and MP3 player, anytime you want.  This is great news for your English!

Podcasts are limitless and if you haven’t started listening, START NOW. If you haven’t, you are missing out. You don’t need to depend on traditional media sources for your news, information, and professional development.

There are native English speaking podcasts about EVERY TOPIC under the sun, from professional topics like business and entrepreneurship, to spirituality, fashion, art, culture, travel, and basically any topic you can imagine.

[Online radio is another great resource](http://lifehacker.com/5917063/five-best-internet-radio-services). You can live stream radio stations from all over the world with an internet connection. [Read More About Podcasts (What is a podcast and why you should care)](http://reallifebh.com/what-is-a-podcast-and-why-you-should-care).

## ESL Podcasts/Podcasts for English Learners

There are many, many podcasts for English learners too. ESL (English as a Second Language) podcasts are made specifically for people learning English.  There are teachers all around the world providing FREE ENGLISH RESOURCES.

In fact, here at Real Life English, we just started doing a weekly podcast to help you guys learn. The weekly podcast, hosted by Trevor and Chad is released EVERY SUNDAY. It covers the FIVE EXPRESSIONS that we post in the RLE International Facebook Community during the week (as sort of a review).

If you haven’t already, we recommend that you join the RLE International Facebook community. This is a great chance to learn not only from thousands of English speakers from around the world, but also the daily expressions, and weekly podcast.

[Check Out RLE Podcast Page](http://reallifebh.com/real-life-english-esl-podcasts)  |  [Subscribe to the RLE Podcast on itunes](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/reallifeengs-podcast/id600128442)

[How to Download Free, Native-Spoken Podcasts](http://www.fluentin3months.com/free-podcasts/)

## [rle podcast](http://reallifebh.com/real-life-english-esl-podcasts)

## Explore Online ESL Listening Resources

Taking advantage of online resources to develop your listening skills is another great strategy. There are so many free online listening resources that you should be aware of. Here’s a quick list of just a few:

* [Listen to Fluency MC on Youtube](http://www.youtube.com/user/collolearn) ([Fluency MC Home Page](http://www.colloandspark.com/))
* [Randall’s ESL Cyber Listening Lab](http://www.esl-lab.com/)
* [Voice of America](http://learningenglish.voanews.com/)
* [Breaking News English](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/)
* [BBC Learning English](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2008/09/080919_us_economy.shtml)
* [English Listening Lounge](http://www.englishlistening.com/)

## Read along with Podcasts and Audiobooks (Transcripts)

Another strategy that is excellent for your listening skills is reading along to a transcript as you listen to native speaking programs.  Most podcasts don’t offer this for free (you can usually get them for a small fee), but there are a lot of other ways to do it. Here are a few:

* [ESL podcasts with Transcripts](http://eslinfo.blogspot.com.br/)
* [Voice of America](http://learningenglish.voanews.com/)
* [10 Sites to download free audiobooks](http://edudemic.com/2012/10/10-sites-to-download-free-audio-books/)
* [For new audiobooks, audible.com](http://www.audible.com/)
* [Amateur Traveler Podcast](http://amateurtraveler.com/tag/podcast-transcript/) (with Transcripts)

## Learn the Lyrics to Your Favorite Songs in English

Music is another excellent way to listen in English, and it’s a lot of fun. The cool thing about music is that most people already listen to music in English. I suggest you print up the lyrics, read them, and look up any words you don’t know.

If you do this regularly, you will build a repertoire of songs that you know and understand. You’ll listen to them again and again and burn the vocabulary into your brain. Read more on

[How Music Can Make You Fluent](http://reallifebh.com/how-music-can-make-you-fluent-in-english)

Here are a few more good reads on Music and English Real Life English:

* [Learn English with Rhythm and Flow](http://reallifebh.com/how-to-learn-english-with-snoop-dogg)
* [Learn the Present Perfect with U2](http://reallifebh.com/learn-english-music-u2)

World famous Fluency MC teaches English listening and speaking in dynamic new ways with rap music. [Check out his project here](http://www.colloandspark.com/).

## Watch Lots of TV and Movies (with and without English subtitles)

This is another convenient, fun way to improve your listening skills. Most people already watch television and movies in English. Now you just need to make your English learning purpose explicit: use these convenient daily habits to learn English.

* TV series are ideal because they are shorter and you can do them every day. You can get the DVDs and watch them in order so that there is a continuous story. *Friends*is the most popular and research shows that people learn a lot of English from it. Other good shows are *Big Bang Theory*and [*How I Met Your Mother*](http://reallifebh.com/how-i-met-your-mother-learn-english-with-t-v)*.*But you can also watch virtually anything else on TV.
* Movies are excellent too.  However, while movies are generally much more enriching and higher quality than TV shows, the 90 to 120+ minutes usually required to watch movies isn’t something people have every day.

SUBTITLES: If you don’t understand what they are saying, put subtitles on in English. Once you get used to that, try taking them off. You can watch the same episode over and over until you really start to understand it. Look for the transcript online.

[Learn How to Make English a Fun Lifestyle](http://reallifebh.com/rle-lifestyle-guide-5-ways-to-make-english-a-part-of-your-daily-life)

## Call to Action

This concludes the first installation of *How to Drastically Improve Your Listening.*There are many more tips in part two of this text, [English Fluency 2.0-Listening Comprehension Secrets](http://reallifebh.com/english-fluency-2-0-esl-listening-comprehension), including lots of new strategies to make English a part of your daily life, key ways to engage and understand people in conversation, listening on the phone, and techniques to build specific parts of your grammar and vocabulary to help listening.

What fun, convenient daily habit can you cultivate to improve your listening? What are your biggest listening difficulties? What strategies and techniques have worked for you? We would love to hear what you think.

You can start improving your listening now by checking out our world famous [Real Life English podcast](http://reallifebh.com/real-life-english-esl-podcasts). We would also love to see you join thousands of members from all around the world (50+ countries) in the [Real Life English international community](http://www.facebook.com/groups/reallifeenglish/). I also recommend checking out two articles that are related to this topic:

* [The Lazy Man’s Guide to Speaking English Like a Native](http://reallifebh.com/lazy-mans-guide)
* [Lifestyle English Guide: How to Make English a Fun Part of Your Daily Life](http://reallifebh.com/rle-lifestyle-guide-5-ways-to-make-english-a-part-of-your-daily-life)

### Take care and we’ll see you in [part II](http://reallifeglobal.com/english-fluency-2-0-esl-listening-comprehension) of this article!

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* [Reddit](http://www.reddit.com/submit?url=http://reallifeglobal.com/secret-tips-to-drastically-improve-your-english-listening-esl/&title=Secret+Tips+to+Drastically+Improve+Your+English+Listening+%28ESL%29)
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#### About the Author

Justin was born near Seattle, Wa (U.S.A.), and graduated from the University of Colorado (Boulder, Co, U.S.A.). He has lived and taught English in Mexico, Colombia, and currently lives and teaches in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

- See more at: http://reallifeglobal.com/secret-tips-to-drastically-improve-your-english-listening-esl/#sthash.E62110My.dpuf