

English Full:Time

# A Simple Guide To Practicing English With Native Speakers

Dear subscriber ,

As you know, speaking English with native speakers is one of the best ways to improve your fluency. But, talking with strangers is hard... and speaking with them in a foreign language is even harder!

Not only that, but...

- Where can you find native speakers to practice with?
- Why would native speakers “waste their time” talking with an English learner?
- How can you introduce yourself?
- What do you say to keep a conversation going?
- How do you build friendships so you can have deeper conversations?

These are great questions, and I will answer them in this guide!

**First, you need to know that...**

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It doesn't matter if you still struggle with grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. There are native speakers all over the world who would love to speak with you! The trick is...

1. Finding us
2. Offering something we want
3. Being a good conversationalist

**Before I continue, I want to say that I don't recommend using language exchange groups and apps.** This is the most obvious solution, but it's definitely not the best. The problem with these groups and apps is that...

1. You waste a lot of time trying to find good partners.
2. You always end up having the same basic conversation: "Hi, how are you? Where are you from? What do you do for a living? Etc."
3. Since it's an exchange, you can't speak English 100% of the time!

Alright, now that you know where NOT to look for partners, let's talk about where you can actually find us.

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## Where Can You Find Native Speakers?

The easiest place to find us is on the internet (obviously, Lol!). And, believe it or not, we use many of the same social media networks that you do!

- Facebook
- YouTube
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Snapchat
- Pinterest
- Reddit
- LinkedIn

**BUT, we tend to “hide” in communities...**

For example, there are Facebook groups that are FULL of English speakers who interact 24/7. You can find communities about anything and everything! Some of my favorites have to do with...

- ❖ Travel
- ❖ Business
- ❖ Personal development
- ❖ Diet, nutrition, & exercise

**These groups are perfect for meeting native speakers.** You can discuss topics you enjoy and practice your conversation skills. Actually, they surround you with so much English that it's like moving to an English speaking country... because, let's be honest, a lot of us “live” on the internet... haha!

Anyhow, that's how I met Genia.

Genia was born in Latvia and grew up in Germany. We met last year in a Facebook group when I answered a question that she had asked on someone else's post. I

offered to call her on Messenger to discuss her question, and we ended up talking for 2 hours. It was the start of a beautiful friendship that still continues today.

I also met Luke in a Facebook group the exact same way. I needed help understanding something, and he offered to explain it to me. After talking on Messenger (again for two hours) we became good friends. Actually, my husband and I ended up visiting Luke a few months later in Los Angeles, California.

So, it is possible to meet native speakers online, but you have to look for us in the right places!

## **Why Would Native Speakers “Waste Their Time” Talking With An English Learner?**

Here’s the deal.

**Nobody is going to help you with your English for free, and you already know this.** That’s why it’s important NOT to tell people that you are “practicing.” Instead, pretend that you already speak fluent English and chat with people.

Pretending is scary, I know. But if you understand what you are reading right now, I guarantee your English is better than you realize. So be confident, don’t apologize for your mistakes, and get ready to meet native speakers!

**All you have to do is offer something people want,  
and they will talk with you.**

There are many ways to do this, but I’ll give you three examples.

- **Travelers that visit YOUR country** love to get advice from locals! They are always looking for new places to see, new foods to try, and new activities to do. And there are so many online forums and groups for travelers! All you have to do is offer suggestions and advice based on your own experience. If

you do that, people will be more than happy to talk with you... and some might even want to hang out with you during their trip!

- **People looking for advice** appreciate anyone that can help solve their problem. As I mentioned earlier, there are all kinds of communities online! So join the ones related to your job, hobbies, and areas of expertise. You can share your knowledge, answer questions, and give advice. This will help you meet lots of people and make lots of friends.
- **University students** often interview people from various cultural backgrounds for school projects... especially if they study subjects like linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and international relations. I bet they would LOVE to have direct connections to the countries and cultures that they study. And, yes, they hang out in groups and forums, too!

As long as you can offer something that people want, they won't care about your level of English. They will chat with you, listen while you speak, and appreciate you taking the time to help them.

## **How Can You Introduce Yourself?**

Good introductions are very important. If your introduction is bad, no one will want to talk with you. So here are some tips on how to make a good introduction.

- Write something that is short and specific
- Give the person a reason to respond
- Be friendly and polite
- Don't include unnecessary information

Here is an example.

In a travel group, you might see a post where someone is asking for advice on what local food to try in your country. You can respond with something like:

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- Hi, Sarah! I see you are planning a trip to Argentina... how exciting! You should definitely try some “asado” and “empanadas” while you are here. These are two of the most popular foods in Argentina. Do you already know which cities you’ll be visiting? Maybe I can suggest some local places for you to visit as well. Let me know if you have any questions... I live here so I’m happy to help with anything you need. :)

Did you see how I asked a question in the response? **Questions are perfect for starting and continuing conversations with people.** And by being helpful, you immediately build rapport with complete strangers.

## What Do You Say To Keep A Conversation Going?

Once you meet someone and introduce yourself, you have to know how to continue a conversation. Many people struggle with this. If they don’t know what to say, the conversation dies. If they say too much, they scare the other person away.

So, I have some tips to help you with this.

### ★ Ask more questions!

People love to talk about their lives and their experiences. So if they can find someone who will listen, they are often happy to continue the conversation. But, be careful not to ask questions that are too deep or too personal, too soon.

### ★ Share a story.

Stories help people get to know each other and discover things they have in common. A good way to transition to a story is by saying, “I know exactly what

you mean. The same thing happened to me once. Last year, I was...." (Then continue with your story.)

**★ Ask their opinion.**

Again, people love talking about themselves! If you can get someone to share their opinions and ideas, they might talk with you for HOURS.

There are many other ways to continue a conversation, but this is enough to get started.

Lastly, let's talk about how to build friendships over time with complete strangers.

## **How Do You Build Friendships So You Can Have Deeper Conversations?**

So far we have been talking about how to meet people online, introduce yourself, and talk to strangers. But the best way to build fluency is by having deeper conversations with the same people. This means you need to build friendships!

Luckily, this isn't hard to do.

In fact, it's so easy that soon you will have TOO MANY people to speak English with.

So, listen, the simple trick to making friends is being kind and helpful. If you do this, people will love you! They will trust you, care about you, and want to spend time with you.

Think about it... there are so many MEAN people on the internet. There are so many rude, opinionated, negative people. All you have to do is be a genuine, kind, and thoughtful person... and you will make plenty of friends.

It doesn't matter where you are from.

It doesn't matter where you live.

It doesn't matter if your English isn't perfect.

Find people who will appreciate something that you have to offer, and then give it to them. **Everyone has something to offer, so think about what you can give.**

I've met many wonderful people online, and many of them have been non-native English speakers.

So don't think that this won't work for you.

It will.

Find communities and start interacting with native speakers through posts, comments, and private messages. Soon you will meet people, make friends, and speak English every day.

If you do this, you will be fluent sooner than you think!

Talk soon,



*Stefanie*   
The English Coach