

How to Practice Speaking with Natives

The smart way to meet native English speakers excited to speak with you so you can practice your spoken English (no matter where you live in the world)

by DREW BADGER

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How to Practice Speaking with Natives

Hi there. I'm Drew Badger, a language learner just like you, the co-founder of EnglishAnyone.com, and the world's #1 English Fluency Guide.

One of the biggest problems language learners face is how to meet people to practice speaking with so they can get fluent. Of course, there are lots of other *English learners* available to speak with, but what you really want – and need – are *native English speakers*... And *the right kind* of native English speakers who are actually excited to meet you, speak with you, and really help you improve.

Because I knew how to meet the right people *in the right way* as I learned Japanese, I was able to make lots of Japanese friends – in both Japan and America – to practice speaking, improve my pronunciation and become a confident, fluent Japanese speaker.

Most English students – and the vast majority of language learning sites online – only focus on the pieces of the language, things like grammar and vocabulary. So, I decided to create a guide dedicated exclusively to helping you meet native English speakers to practice with so you can develop your ability to speak in the real world.

No matter your goals, or the people you'd like to meet, this guide will help you:

Erase the negative beliefs, fears and worries that stop you from meeting people and expressing yourself

Discover *the right kind* of people to meet and practice with to experience the fastest improvement

And avoid the mistakes most learners make when trying to connect with native speakers

You'll also learn my top 5 favorite places online to meet native speakers, and be taken step-by-step – from locating your perfect practice partners to beginning conversations – with one of my best tactics usually reserved for my private students (no matter where you live in the world).

After reading **How to Practice Speaking with Natives**, you'll be better prepared than 95% of English language learners, and will know exactly what to do to see dramatic improvement in your English. All I ask is that you keep an open mind and make an honest effort to try using what you learn in these pages, even if it feels a bit uncomfortable at first. Persist and you will achieve great results.

I look forward to hearing your success stories! :)



How to Practice Speaking with Natives

Part 1 - Begin with the End

I always advise students to practice with native speakers because they'll help you learn the real English native speakers are using currently, improve your pronunciation and introduce you to culture naturally. They'll also give you valuable listening, fluency training and confidence building experience with every conversation.

Most students, however, spend time in classrooms, which can only simulate conversational English, and in English learning forums, which primarily attract other learners.

While it's important to have a group of people at your fluency level to offer emotional support, you won't learn how to become a great speaker very quickly from people who aren't already great speakers. Always surround yourself with people better than you to help you improve.

If you're willing to get a bit uncomfortable to achieve your goals, please keep reading...

Even if you've never successfully met native speakers to practice with, begin now by imagining the kind of people you'd like to meet. Describe them in detail. Are they male or female? How old are they? What are their interests? Where do they live? What kind of English do they speak? The more detailed you can be in your description – and the more clearly you can see them in your mind – the easier it will be to find and connect with them in real life.

As you begin thinking about these people, your mind may interrupt you to ask *how* you'll be able to meet native speakers. You may think there aren't any native speakers living nearby, that your speaking ability isn't good enough yet, or that native speakers won't want to speak with you. We will return to these negative beliefs later, so for now, just focus on describing your perfect practice partners.

Next, see yourself having conversations with these native speakers in your mind. What are you talking about? What are you learning, and what activities are you engaged in while speaking? Are you speaking with people via Skype, or are you sitting with them in some café while traveling in some foreign country? If you can see the conversation – and the activities you're participating in with native speakers – you WILL be able to make them happen.

Now, decide what you are willing to GIVE in return for meeting the native speakers you envision. Nothing is truly free, and lasting relationships require time and energy. Are you willing to make the effort to contact people, and to become a supportive friend and partner? How can you help them, and what can you teach? (Note: This doesn't have to mean teaching your language in return for learning English, which I believe is neither the best use of your time nor very practical for most people. So, think about an interest you're familiar with that you can share information about from your unique perspective, as I did when I came to Japan to learn Japanese gardening.)

Finally, express gratitude. Even before meeting these people, be grateful that there are people in this world excited to welcome you into their lives as a valued friend. Be thankful, also, that you live at a time when it's

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never been easier to connect with people, and for a mind that can help you do so. Take a moment every day to really feel this sense of gratitude, and your ideal practice partners will begin to appear like magic.

Part 2 - Develop the Mindset of a Successful English Speaker

When you think about meeting and having conversations with native speakers, do you become excited or nervous? Is your pronunciation a source of pride or embarrassment? Can you express yourself automatically, answering native speakers with ease and confidence, or are you concerned you'll hesitate, make mistakes and forget what to say? Do you believe native speakers are patient and eager to meet you, or do you think you'll make them feel bored, annoyed and burdened?

I'm asking these important questions because your thoughts determine your actions and outcomes. Believe you will annoy and frustrate native speakers, and you will. Think you will not be able to meet people to practice with, and you will never meet anyone.

Your mind is an incredibly powerful tool that attracts what you focus on, whether the object of your focus is something you personally believe to be "good" or "bad." Focus on a positive outcome you desire and your mind will pull that outcome to you. Similarly, think about something you DON'T want to happen and your mind will attract that negative outcome to you with equal intensity.

If you experience negative thoughts and feelings that damage your self-confidence and keep you from achieving success, remember two important things:

1. Your thoughts are completely under your control. You cannot control the world around you, but you can control how you think and feel about the things you experience. Even if something you don't like happens to you, you can still decide how you think about – and react to – that thing.

2. Your beliefs are personal, not unchanging facts true for everyone. For every person who believes they can't find someone to practice speaking with because of their location, age or ability level, there is another who believes they can. For every person who doesn't speak because they worry about their pronunciation, there is another who rejects this belief as false and practices speaking anyway. Understanding this, if both positive and destructive beliefs attract the outcome the thinker focuses on, why not fill your mind with only positive, helpful beliefs?

Successful speakers decide what they want, and don't let negative beliefs take root in their minds. You ARE a great speaker, even if you don't know many words yet, and you CAN meet lots of native speakers eager to practice with you, even if you're physically thousands of miles away from them. Prepare your mind to be successful and you will create success!

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Part 3 - Rethink English Speaking Practice

You now have a clear idea of the kind of people you'd like to meet, and you know to fill your mind with positive beliefs that pull you toward success. Your next step is to change the way you think about practicing. First, understand that fluency building is a team sport. You should never depend on any one teacher, resource or native English speaking friend for all of your learning needs. It's important to create a diverse "team" of people and resources – and utilize the strengths of each – to give you the fastest results possible.

The native speakers you'll learn to meet using this guide should become the part of your team that helps you improve your fluency by talking about and doing things IN English with you, rather than the people who will constantly correct your English and answer complicated questions about grammar. Remember that speaking a language doesn't qualify someone to teach it, and that you will probably have a better understanding of grammar rules than most native speakers. So, with the exception of the occasional question about the language, just develop a friendly relationship with the native speakers you'll meet, and learn the language naturally through conversations and activities the way you learned your own language.

To add native speakers to your fluency team, you'll need to think like a confident, self-respecting English speaker looking for friends, and not an overly eager English learner begging for help.

Imagine a young man entering a bar full of people on a Saturday night. He looks around, sees a nice woman he'd like to approach and walks up to her. After exchanging basic greetings, the man asks the woman to marry him.

The woman, who's already a bit nervous because she's being approached by someone she doesn't know, is now REALLY worried. She knows almost nothing about the man proposing to her and she thinks he must be VERY weird and needy.

The man's mistake is obvious here – he tried to go from introduction to very intimate relationship in a single step – yet English learners all over the world commit the exact same error when they try meeting native speakers.

Native speakers are people just like you. They also want to find new and interesting friends. And, like you, they worry about meeting people who might be crazy, only interested in sex, demanding or contribute nothing valuable to a relationship.

The relationship you want needs to be built on trust over time, and certain steps must happen to take the relationship to higher, more intimate levels. You must first find people who share your interests, then contact them with WITHOUT mentioning anything about improving your English. Once you've established a dialogue, continue to show interest in the native speaker and ask questions until they respond with questions of their own – indicating their interest in building a relationship with you. From there, allow the relationship to develop at a speed comfortable for everyone, and only mention talking over Skype when you have a good reason to actually show something on camera (or your relationship has become very familiar).

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We will go through the initial steps of this process in detail with one of my favorite techniques shortly, but first you should know some of the best places online to meet native speakers.

Part 4 - My Top 5 Places for Meeting Native Speakers Online

In this section, you'll find my 5 favorite places online to meet native speakers – the exact same places where I meet new people for friendships, business relationships and language practice.

NONE of the following recommendations were created specifically for language learners, and that's the whole point. You won't be forced to translate any text to learn, or get stuck in forums with other struggling, and often judgmental, learners. And you'll be able to spend ALL of your time speaking in English with great people about your passions... For free!

Your goal should be to use the sites below to meet and begin relationships with native speakers – which can lead to friendships and Skype conversations IF YOU NURTURE THEM PROPERLY. (Note: There's not enough space here to cover everything about each of these sites, so explore them on your own, and use the detailed instructions in the next part of this guide as a general example applicable anywhere.)

Yahoo Groups/Yahoo Games – These two places are home to TONS of native English speakers nicely organized by interest/favorite game. Think like a native speaker and begin by searching for hobbies, activities and games you're interested in. The more specific your search, the better your chances will be of meeting native speakers who also enjoy these activities. Be sure to ask lots of questions, and offer to begin friendly games with people. (Sometimes native speakers can be shy, too!)

When I began creating my first book, a Yahoo Group dedicated to self-publishing was incredibly valuable. I learned a lot about the steps involved in producing a book and met many other aspiring publishers I remain in contact with to this day.

Meetup.com – This is one of the best sites for meeting actual people in your area. You can search by location and interest, and often find lots of fun activities to participate in.

I used Meetup.com to find Japanese people who became both students and friends when I was living in Seattle. I've also met fellow entrepreneurs to learn from through the site.

Craigslist.org – This site is great for doing everything from selling cheap furniture to finding true love. The simple interface allows you to search for jobs, housing and friends with ease.

I've used Craigslist to find friends by posting my own personal ads, and actually went to a concert with someone who had an extra ticket they were trying to sell. (Great relationships can have odd beginnings!)

Twitter – Twitter allows you to search for conversations happening in real time, join them and ask questions. Whatever your interest, there's probably someone tweeting about it right now who just might become a

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lifelong friend.

I've used Twitter to meet people, get feedback on ideas and discover the latest news for my own conversation practice. It's also a great way to begin conversations with writing if you're feeling a bit shy.

Youtube – YouTube is an ideal forum for meeting people because people reveal so much about themselves through the videos they make. You can post comments, ask questions and learn tons of great information about people without even having to speak one word!

YouTube is such a great resource, in fact, that the next section of this guide is devoted entirely to teaching just one of the many fantastic ways to find and begin building relationships with outgoing English speaking video producers...

Part 5 - How to Meet Native English Speakers with YouTube

You now know the general concepts behind how to think and find native speakers to practice with, so it's finally time to go step-by-step through one of the fastest and most effective ways to meet people online. (Note: As before, there are way too many steps in the total process of meeting someone from introduction to Skype conversation, so this example will cover the most important first steps: finding people and beginning dialogues.)

As you proceed, know that not everyone you contact will become a friend. Don't get discouraged or frustrated by this, though. You may have to work a bit to find someone you really connect with, and it may take time, but it's worth it to find truly great people to build lasting relationships with. That said, let's begin!

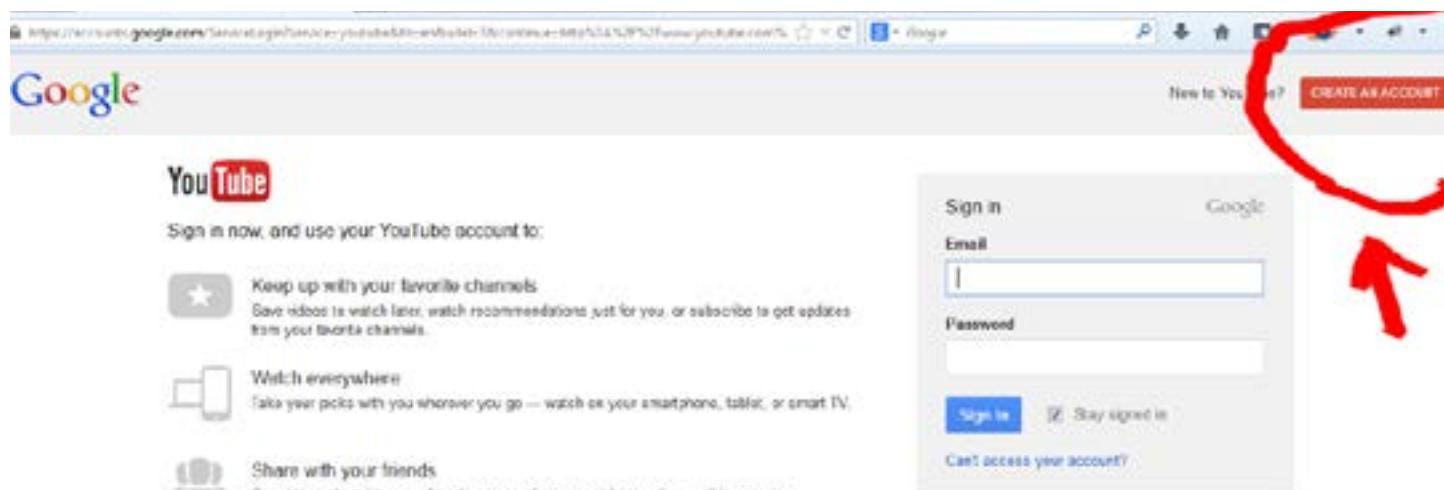
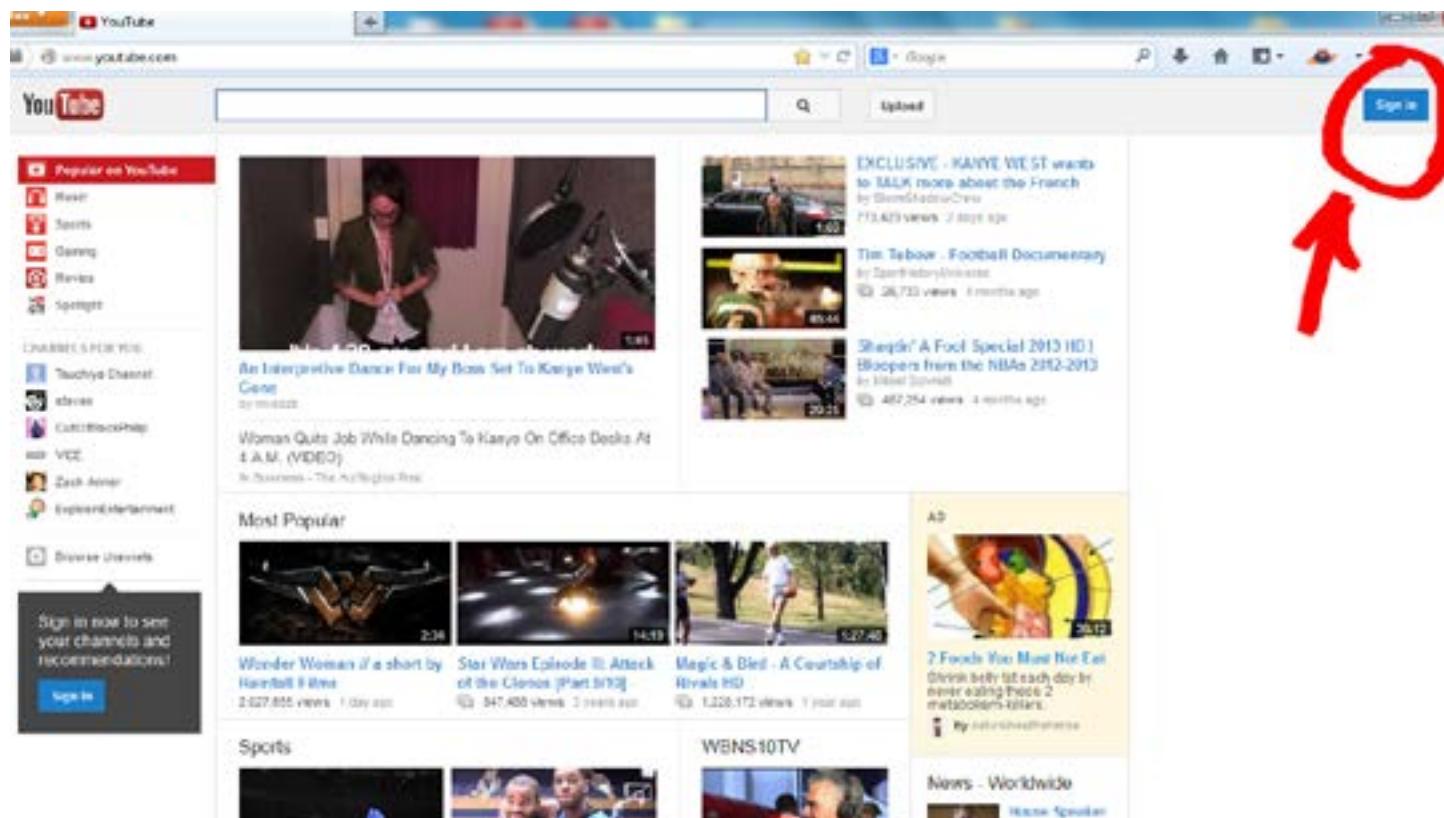
I'm a HUGE fan of using YouTube to meet people because anyone producing videos – especially someone showing their face on camera – WANTS to meet people! They want to share, and they're excited! They're not shy, and they care more about their passion or interest than they do about what they look like on camera. (And I should know because I'm one of them!)

You just have to know how to use YouTube to find the right people for you.

What you'll learn today can also work on other video sites, social media networks and blogs, so feel free to try this strategy elsewhere. I just think it works best on YouTube because YouTube is the biggest network, the most popular, and you're most likely to meet great people there. Here's how you do it...

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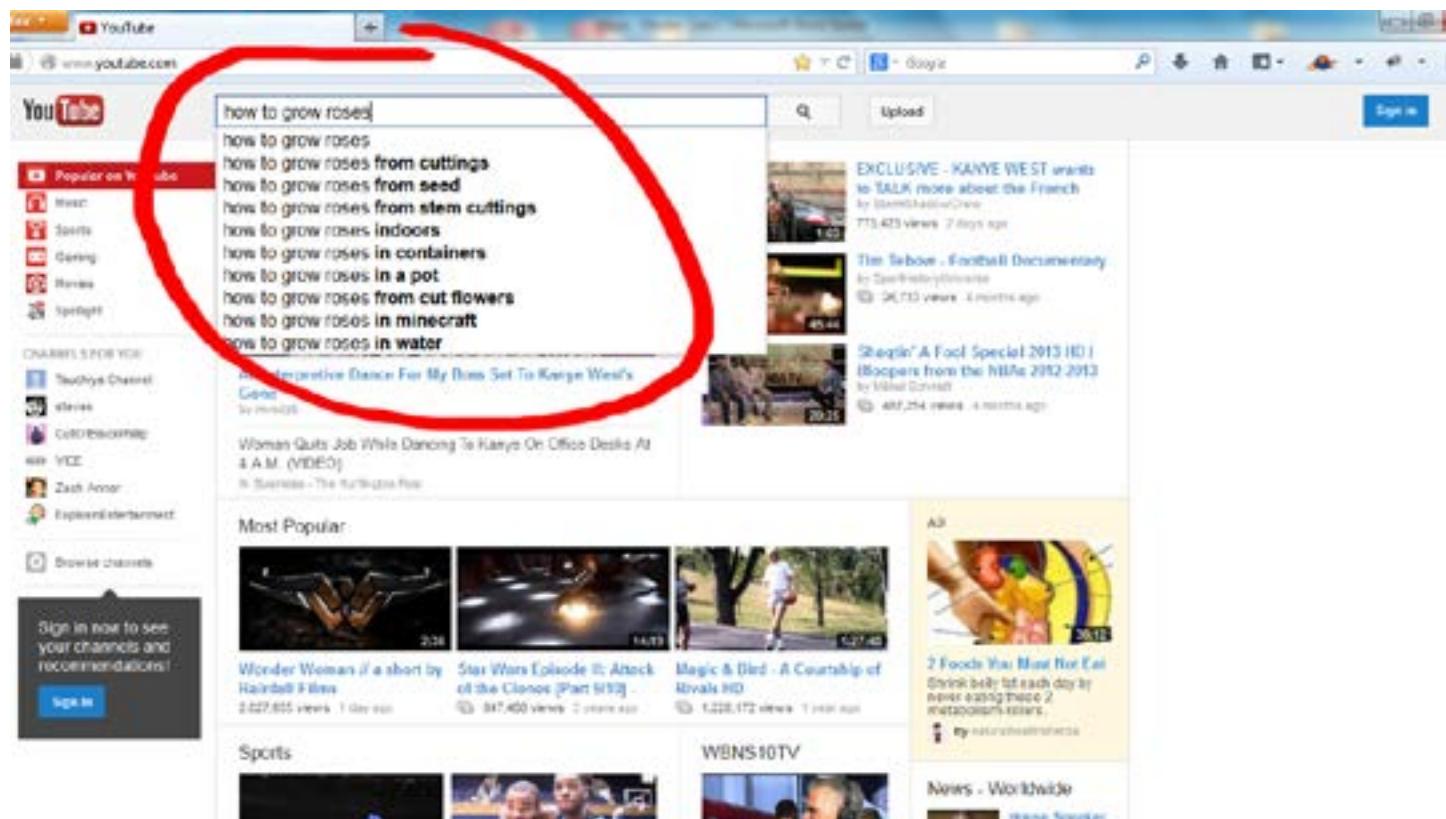
Step 1: Visit YouTube and sign in if you already have an account. If you don't have an account and need to create one, click on the "Sign in" button and then click on "CREATE AN ACCOUNT" to join. It's free!



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Step 2: Think about a specific hobby - or niche - you're currently pursuing, or are really interested in learning more about. A niche (pronounced by some as "nitch" and others as "neesh") is a very specific, subsection of a topic. If the board topic is "learn English," a potential niche might be "Learn English skateboarding idioms."

Step 3: Begin your search. When you begin to type your interest in the search field on YouTube, many potential niches will probably appear. In the example I chose, the topic of "how to grow roses" generates lots of niches that people regularly search for. Whatever you're interest, enter it and begin your search.



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Step 4: Examine the search results. Here are the results from my example search, organized by relevance. (Note: You may have different search results than I do because Google and YouTube regularly tailor results based on your personal search habits.)

Look closely at the upload dates and view counts of the top searches. They may be helpful, entertaining videos, but we really want RECENT content and LOW view counts.

YouTube search results for "how to grow roses". The results are as follows:

- How to Grow Roses** by WhiteFlowerFarm - 3 years ago - 118,117 views
- 10 Easy Tips for Growing Roses** by Lynne Chonak - 7 months ago - 17,274 views
- How to Propagate Roses from Cuttings - 3 Simple Methods to Propagate them from Cuttings** by LynnMemory - 1 year ago - 67,721 views
- How to grow rose plant cuttings in water updates Flowers Online** by Flowers.Grow - 7 months ago - 76,105 views

Step 5: Activate search filters. Almost hidden just below the search bar is a button called "Filters." Click on this to see more options. The "Upload Date" column is what you want. You should be looking for videos created in the last week, or month AT THE LATEST, because you want to find people who are currently active on YouTube.

YouTube search results for "how to grow roses". A red arrow points to the "Filters" button located just below the search bar.

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The image displays two identical YouTube search results pages for the query "how to grow roses". Each page features a sidebar on the left with channel recommendations and a main content area on the right showing video thumbnails and descriptions. A red box highlights the "Filters" dropdown menu in both instances. The dropdown menu lists filtering options such as "Popular on YouTube", "Music", "Sports", "Gaming", "Movies", "TV Shows", "Spotlight", and "Channels for You". Below these, specific filters for upload date are shown: "Last hour", "Today", "This week", "This month", and "This year". The main content area shows several video thumbnails, each with a title like "How to grow roses", a brief description, and view counts.

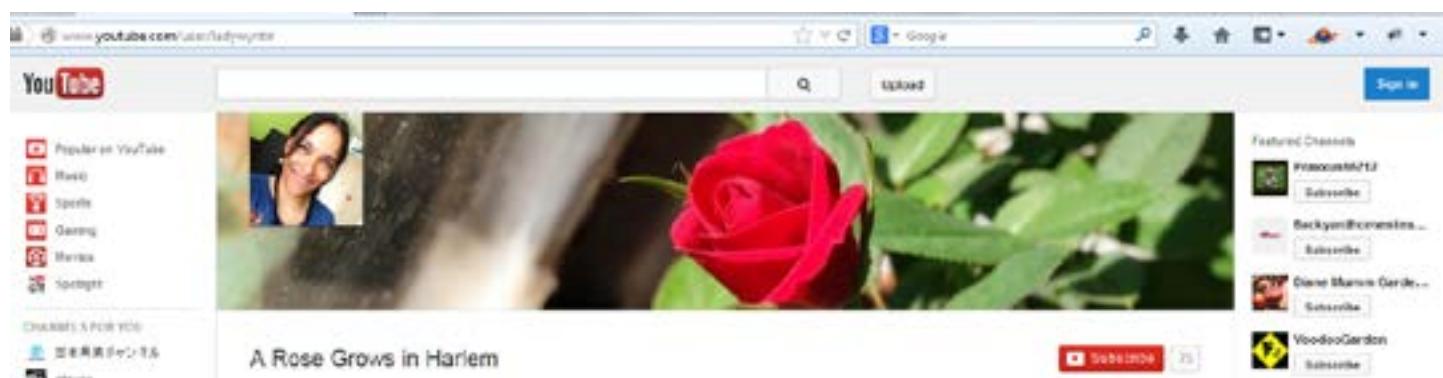
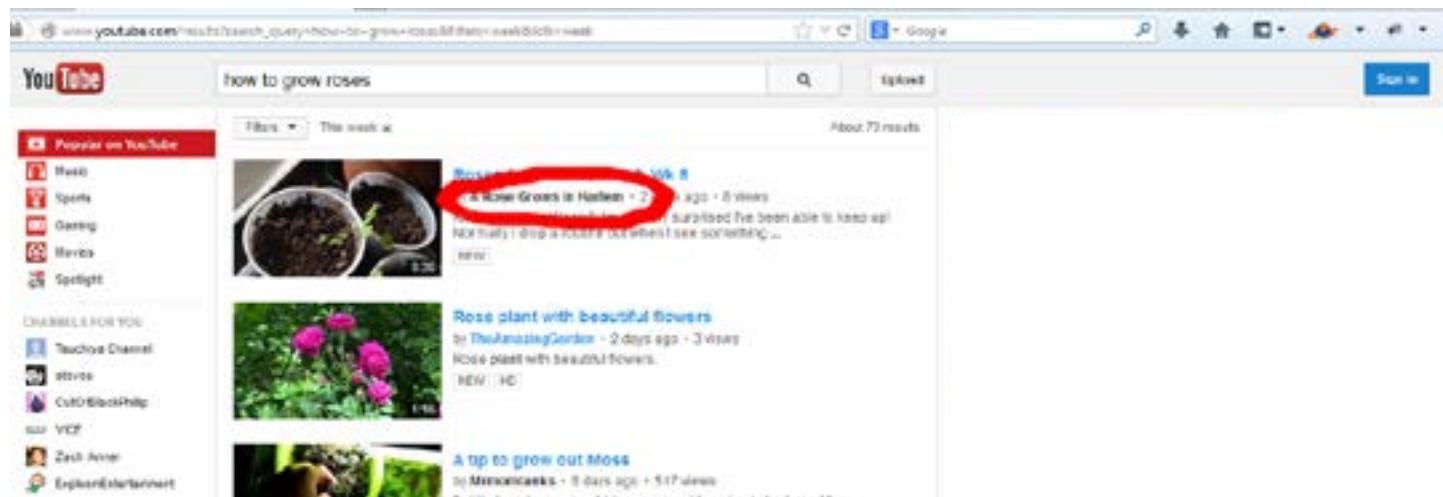
Step 6: Run your filtered search and examine the results. These example videos are EXACTLY what we want – RECENT videos with LOW view counts. Producers of popular channels who get millions of views are more difficult to contact, so we want to find regular, everyday people making videos about their hobbies and passions that would LOVE to receive comments and questions. THIS is where the gold is!

This screenshot shows the YouTube search results for "how to grow roses" with the "This week" filter selected. The filter dropdown is highlighted with a red box. The search results page displays several video thumbnails and titles, such as "Roses from Seed, PART 2, WK 8" and "Rose plant with beautiful flowers". The sidebar on the left includes a "Filters" dropdown, a "Popular on YouTube" section, and a "Channels for You" section. The main content area shows the filtered search results.

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Step 7: Start watching videos and learn about the people producing them. This step gives you the PERFECT way to discover the personality of the video creator... AND hear how they speak. With this information, you'll find the right people to contact, and will be able to do so with confidence. Just understand that you might have to watch many videos – and possibly search for older videos - before finding someone you're excited to connect with.

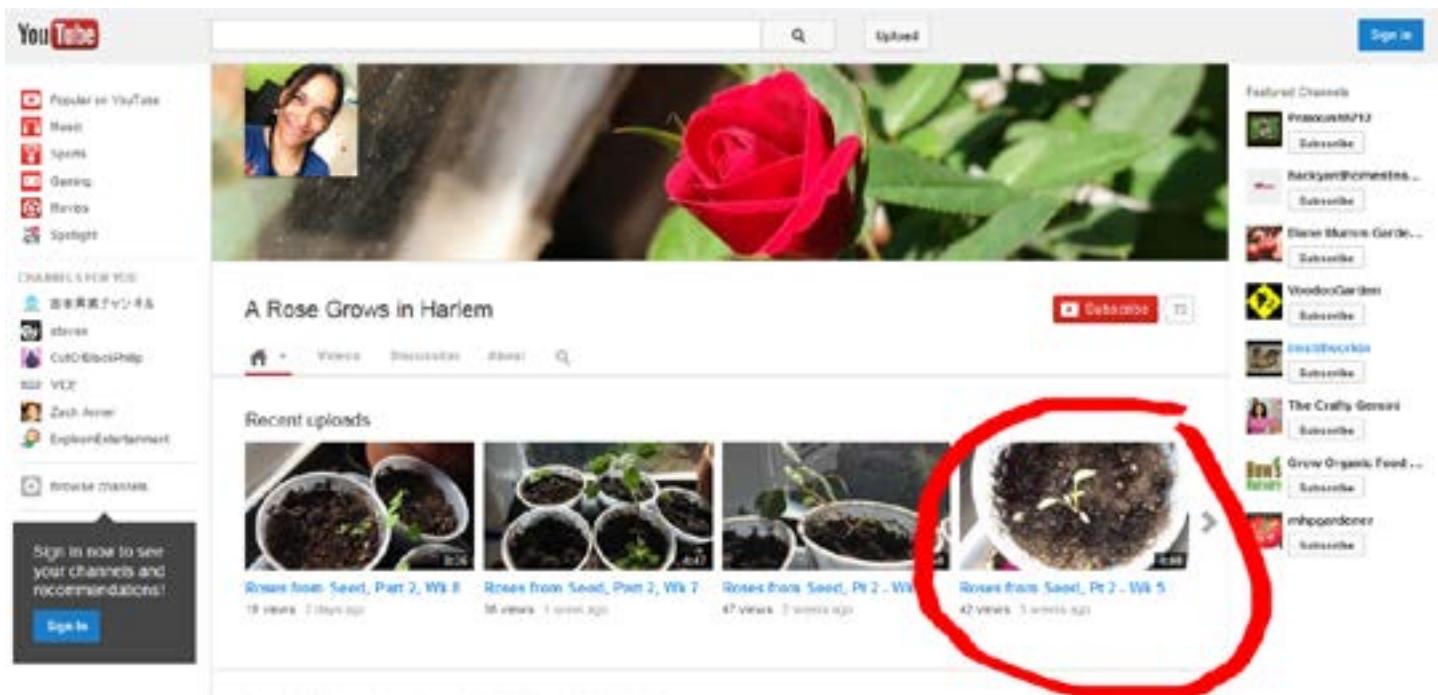
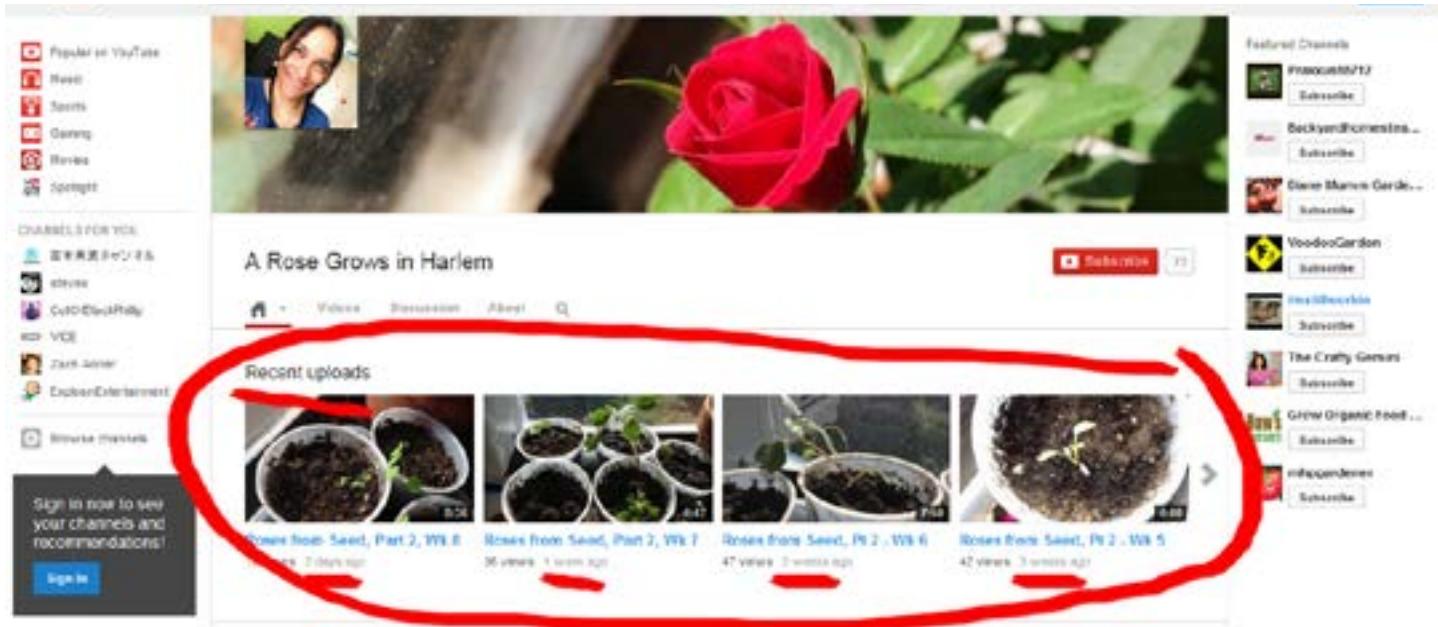
Step 8: Visit a channel. After you've watched a few videos and have found someone you think could be right for you, visit the producer's channel. The example I found is FANTASTIC! This woman has a lovely, smiley profile picture, also called an "avatar," and a channel image that clearly indicates what kinds of passions she has. Obviously, this woman cares about what she does... And that's just kind of person you should be trying to meet.



Step 9: Explore the channel. Once you find a promising channel – one with recent activity and low view counts on videos – explore the videos on the channel further. Look for lots of recent content, so you know the person posts regularly, and review some of their older videos.

I selected a video from a few weeks ago because that's a long enough time for regular viewers of the producer's videos to visit and post comments. Click on the video you'd like to watch and then scroll down below the video to check out the comments section.

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Step 10: Review the comments of a video from the producer's channel. Click on "Show more" to read the description below the video and have a look at the comments. In the example video I chose, and in the video description below it, the producer says she had her cat "put to sleep." This expression means to harmlessly kill a sick pet that might be suffering. Because she notes this both in the video and in the description, she's giving an invitation for others to say something about it – kind of like when you tell people it's your birthday, expecting people to say "Happy Birthday!" to you.

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Uploading videos by A Rose Grows in Harlem

Roses from Seed, Pt 2 - Wk 5 by A Rose Grows in Harlem

Roses from Seed, Pt 2 - Wk 4 by A Rose Grows in Harlem

Roses from Seed, Pt 2 - Wk 3 by A Rose Grows in Harlem

Roses from Seed, Pt 2 - Wk 2 by A Rose Grows in Harlem

Roses from Seed, Pt 2 - Wk 1 by A Rose Grows in Harlem

Growing Roses from Seed - Week 11 by A Rose Grows in Harlem

Roses from Seed, Pt 2 - Wk 6 by A Rose Grows in Harlem 417 views

How to Draw an Open Rose by Jane Ashercane 231,322 views

Japanese "Exciting Bookstore"【ワクワク本屋】 by Richard & Jen 1,200 views

Buttercream Rose, how to pipe! by happythoughtuk 1,218,781 views

How to make an Origami Rose revisited by bethelizabeth 2,004,239 views

Origami Rose (Jo Nakashima) by Jo Nakashima 2,154,080 views

How to grow a mango tree from seed! by ARIJULAHAN 3,839

Roses from Seed, Pt 2 - Wk 5

A Rose Grows in Harlem 11 videos

42 Views

417 Subscribers

Published on Sep 7, 2013

Hey there! Sorry the sound is really low on this one. I should look into getting a microphone. My cat, Richard Parker was put to sleep this afternoon so I couldn't raise my voice too much. I hope you all

Show more

Exploder Comments (A Rose Grows in Harlem)

jennyfullview 2 weeks ago

Sorry to hear about Richard Parker. I'm going to venture into the stratification process for my seeds this winter. I'm thinking of doing a VLOG like yours :)

Reply

A Rose Grows in Harlem 2 weeks ago

Awesome! Keep track. It's great to see how they progress over time!

Thanks for kind words for Richard Parker. ^_*

Reply

Predictably, when someone commented on the fact that her cat died, she responded! A viewer said, “Sorry to hear about Richard Parker.” That was the name of her cat. And then the comment went on to show a connected interest.

Notice that both the comment and the reply from the producer were around the same time. This means that the producer cares about visitors and actually takes the time to reply to continue conversations. This is important because you only want to be contacting people who take the time to reply. If a video has no comments, I recommend you try posting once. But if there are lots of comments and no replies, find someone else.

Step 11: Plan your “opener.” All relationships begin with an “opener,” or the first thing you say to someone to begin a conversation. This can be something as simple as “Hello.” But the more unique and impressive your opener, the more memorable and interesting you become to the person you want to begin a relationship with.

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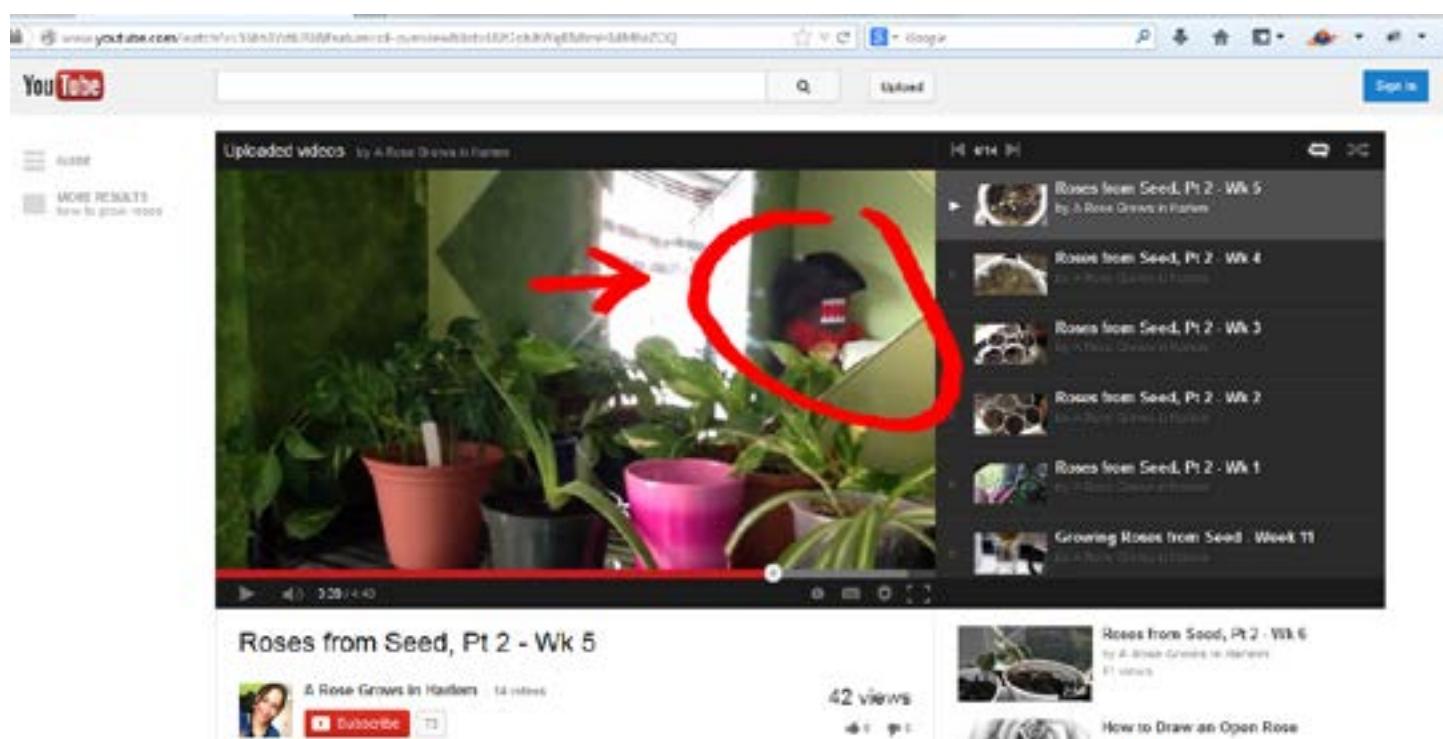
The comment the viewer made is a great opener, and the producer replied promptly. The problem is that the conversation ended because the viewer didn't ask any questions. To begin a conversation, you must notice something unusual or interesting about the person you're "opening" to generate interest, AND ask them a question to begin a dialogue. The question is the important part!

Closely viewing the video on the same page, I thought of a potential opener I might use. Look at the frame from the example video. In the mirror, and under what I guess is a hat, is actually a popular character from Japan named Domokun. In my own comment, I might say something like:

"Thanks for posting the video! Very informative. :)

By the way, I noticed you've got a stuffed Domokun doll in the room with your plants. I live in Japan and it was a nice surprise to see that in a New York apartment. Where did you get that?"

I've complimented the producer, noticed something that most people wouldn't, which is my opener, and I've asked a question.

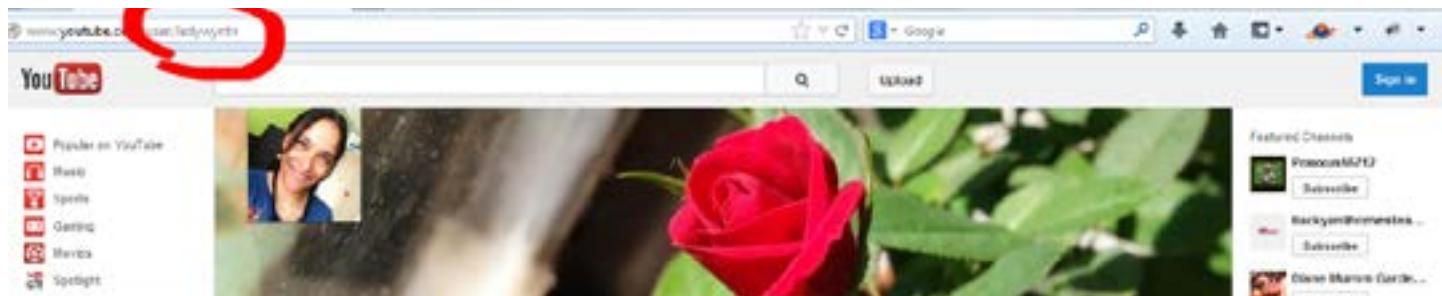


Now, I'd post this comment and wait to see if she'd reply. If she replies with a statement, like an explanation about where she got the doll, then I'd ask another question about her or her plants. And I would continue to ask questions, as long as I'm not being too annoying and pushy, until she asks me one back. If you ask three or four questions and don't receive any enthusiastic responses, keep looking for someone else.

If she does ask a question back – and this is a strong indicator of interest – I'd continue the conversation by writing her back via YouTube's channel messaging feature.

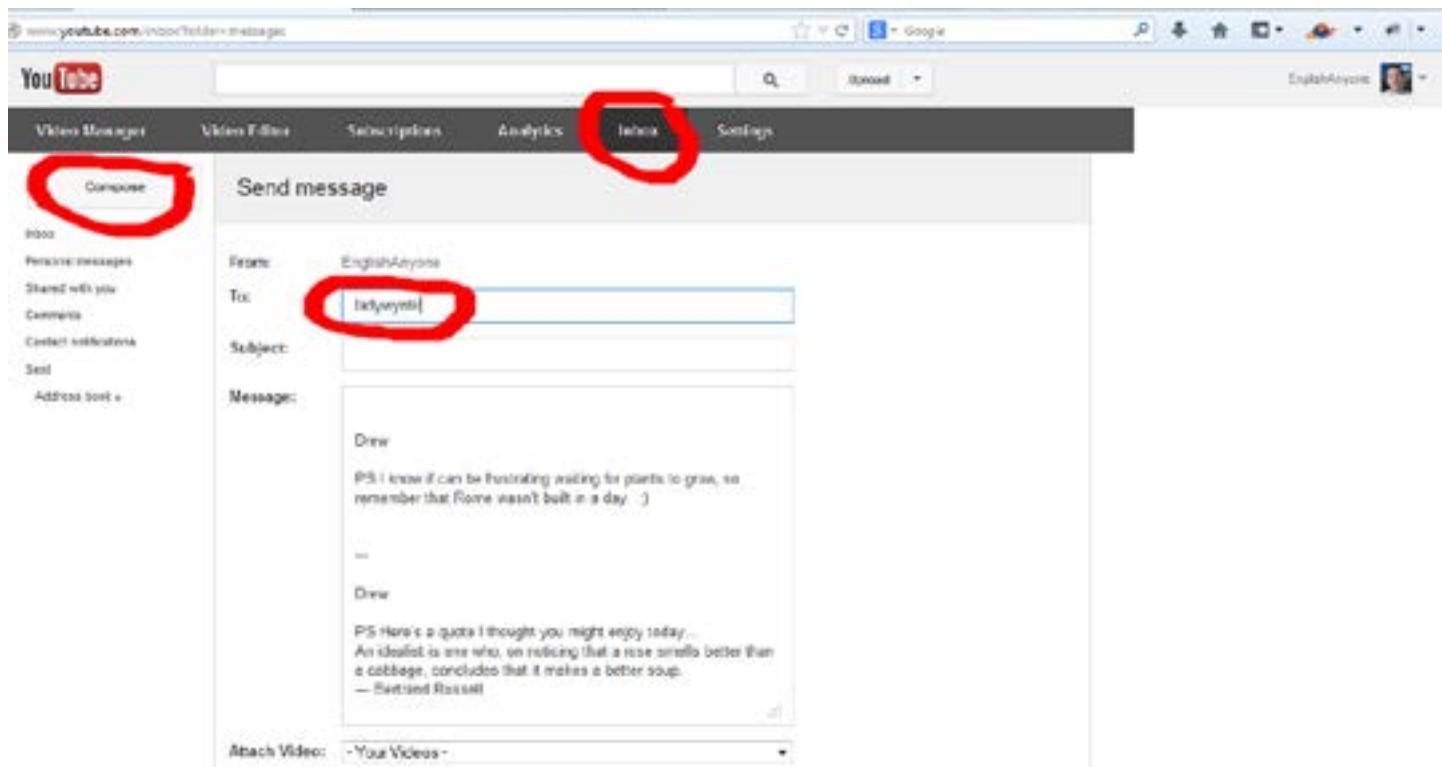
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Step 12: Build the relationship with a mail to the producer's channel. Get the channel's name from their channel URL, as channel names are often different from their URLs, and mail them from your account's inbox. Just be sure to send a mail ONLY after they ask you a question first, so you're sure they're interested in getting to know you more.



When you mail, begin by thanking them for taking the time to reply, say that it's great to meet them, and introduce yourself in more detail. A paragraph or two is just fine, but nothing too long.

Be sure to ask some more questions relating to your shared interest so the person is more inclined to mail you back. You can also provide your regular email address in your mail, and explain that they can keep the conversation going by mailing you at your regular email address because you don't check YouTube very often.



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At the end of your mail – after your name – add an appropriate and helpful quote:
At the end of your mail – after your name – add an appropriate and helpful quote:

"PS I know it can be frustrating waiting for plants to grow, so remember that Rome wasn't built in a day. :)"

Or you can just leave a quick word of inspiration, which can be great, especially if there's some connection to the person or subject:

"PS Here's a quote I thought you might enjoy today..."

An idealist is one who, on noticing that a rose smells better than a cabbage, concludes that it makes a better soup."

— Bertrand Russell

I found that quote by searching Google for "famous quotes about roses." You can do the same for any subject.

If you ask great questions and are friendly, even if you make mistakes in your English, they will probably mail you to grow the relationship. As things progress, and you both become more comfortable, you can transition from email to text chatting on Facebook, and then finally on to some other video chat like Skype.

As you go through this process, it's important NOT to force anything. There are LOTS of people on YouTube, so just keep opening different people until you FEEL a nice fit with someone. When it happens, you will both know it, and the relationship will grow naturally.

Your Next Step...

What you've learned in this valuable guide is just one piece of the complete fluency puzzle. Besides meeting native English speakers to practice with, you also need to be understood, learn to use grammar without thinking and develop speaking confidence. To help you master all of these things so you can finally speak fluent English successfully, I've created a unique English fluency training and speaking confidence program called Master English Conversation 2.0.

Master English Conversation 2.0 is a complete video course that guides you step-by-step from your current level of English all the way to fluency so you can enjoy English movies, TV shows, music and conversations, and express yourself confidently in English the way you can in your native language – no matter where you live, or how old you are.

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If you'd like to learn more about how Master English Conversation 2.0 can help you quickly achieve your English fluency goals, click on the link below...

CLICK HERE to Start Speaking English Fluently, Confidently and Automatically