



APPS AND WEBSITES FOR LEARNING ENGLISH

LEARNING SKILLS LESSON



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Today, I am going to talk to you about the best apps and websites for learning English. And they're not going to be your average. I'm not going to recommend the normal Duolingo and Babbel and all of that. These are more specific things to help you work on individual skills, skills like pronunciation, writing feedback, speaking, **et cetera**.

As always, there is a free PDF that goes with this lesson. It contains the full transcript along with keywords and their definitions as well. So you can use this for listening practice too - how **meta**.



HiNative

This one is really special. It's incredibly unique. It is something that I think will help almost anyone who is learning a language. Now, this app is free - it's called HiNative. Oh, my word, it's wonderful. It's such an incredible tool for learners of **virtually** any language.

In my experience, one of the most frustrating parts of learning a new language is the constant **stream** of doubts and questions going round and round in my own head, especially when you're in an earlier stage, there are just so many questions. And when you get to that more advanced stage, the questions you have are so niche and you need a native speaker or a teacher to answer them. Why is this like that? Why don't you say it like that? Will I sound natural if I say it like this?

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I needed a teacher or a native speaker around me 24/7 to be able to ask them all of these constant doubts and questions. And obviously for 99.99% of us having a teacher around 24/7 is pretty much impossible unless you're lucky enough to be married to one, I guess. This is especially true if you're learning a really popular language like English because there are lots of other people in the same situation who also want a lot of attention. The HiNative app provides the solution here. On their free app, you can ask any question about language and native speakers will answer you. They support questions for over 113 languages. You can sign up and take advantage of this free app on Android, iOS, or on desktop.

You enter your own native language and the language that you're learning. You can see right here how many questions have been asked. And they are receiving a lot of answers as well from native speakers. It's so valuable because you're not just learning textbook English, you're learning expressions, phrases, and slang terms that are **genuinely** used by native speakers every day. You enter your language and the language that you're learning, type in your email, create a username and a password, and you're ready.

Now, when you go to ask a question, you choose a question template. You can use all of the templates for free apart from does this sound natural and foreign language diary. The rest are free. Is so easy to do, even beginners can ask questions easily using these templates. Let's give it a go. So let's ask the 'what's the difference' one. What is the difference between affect and effect? I've waited just a short while and look at all of the responses.

I really like the premium feature. It does just sound natural because you can get your writing corrected by a native speaker. So let me write an example sentence like this one, the children are being very misbehaving today.



Then let's see what the native speakers do to correct my writing. Exactly perfect correction. What a fantastic resource that does this sound natural feature is only available to premium users.

However, you can upgrade your account for free for seven days. So I really recommend you do that. One more feature that I really, really appreciate is that there is no private messaging feature. So this can not be used as a dating site, which sadly is a big worry for a lot of people who use language exchange services. Users can only communicate with each other through question and answer. So it feels very safe. You can study the languages in comfort and safety. No one's using it for dating. If you'd like to download HiNative and try it for yourself for free, then you can get it on iOS, Android, and desktop. I've left all of the links down below in the description box.

2

Google Drive/Docs

Let's move on to app number two, and this one is an **oldie, but a goodie**. It is Google Docs/Drive. And this is the most wonderful language correction and organisation tool. I used to teach group classes and I would always make my students complete their homework on a Google shared document. This is so that I could make tweets and my students could see where I had made corrections, view what I had changed, the edits I'd made, and see my comments that I'd made on them as well.

It also meant that my students had neat files, a nice organisation system of all of their homework, and their essays that they're done throughout the years. So they could see their progress and they could use it. They could use the corrections most importantly as a revision tool. So if an exam was coming up, they could go through all of their past mistakes to make sure that they don't repeat them. If your teacher is still making you handwrite essays and store them in a folder, talk to them, it's time to modernise.

Alternatively, if you find someone who's willing to correct your work, ask them to do it on Google Docs so that you have this...



so that you have this amazing resource. When I was a student learning Spanish, I never kept hold of my feedback in my essays. They were on pieces of paper, and I'd put them on my bag, and I'd lose them. I was terrible at that. When I went to university and started learning Italian, I was really, really organised. And I still have these folders and files month by month, year by year of all of my work. I promise you this will be your best revision resource.

3

Oxford Learner's Dictionary

Next, let's talk about one of my favourite, favourite dictionaries. As a teacher and a language learner, I can promise you this is one of the best of the best. Well, I've been teaching on YouTube for nearly six years and I've used it since the very beginning. It is Oxford Learner's Dictionary. And the reason I love it so much is because they have the most fantastic **IPA** transcriptions. Some will offer lots of different accents, but they won't provide the transcription.

Oxford Learner's Dictionary provides everything you need. You can listen to the audio and standard American English and standard British English as well as many other accents on some words as well. And the written transcription too. It is beautiful. It's a dictionary that's designed for learners in mind. So the definitions are really clear and understandable. They have the word origin on most words as well, which is really interesting as well as antonyms and synonyms. It's always really, really good to look at the synonyms so that you can further expand your vocabulary.

And something that I think is absolutely fantastic, as a massive **advocate** for word diaries, you can add words to your own word list. Phrase word list doesn't sound that exciting, but **it gets me going**. Every time you search a word, you can add it to your word list. It only takes a click. And then at the end of the year, or before an exam, you have a list of everything that you've had to research right there for you with the pronunciation and the definition, and the synonym, and the origin. Oh, it's just gorgeous.



It's the perfect vocab acquisition tool and pronunciation tool as well. It just ticks so many boxes. I love it. There are lots of other dictionaries out there, but this one is my favourite.

4 Forvo

Let's move on to website number four, this is called Forvo. It's a pronunciation website and you search for any word in a lot of languages. It's got a lot of languages, but obviously, we're focusing on English on this channel, English with Lucy, slight hint. You search for any word, let's search for the word old, for example, and you have lots of examples of people from different parts of the world.

So basically you can compare how words are pronounced differently in different countries and in different accents. And you can also contribute audio recordings to your own language as well. I might secretly do a few for this website **in return**. It's really, really cool if you don't want to rely on phonetic transcriptions all the time, you want to hear how a word is actually pronounced, or you want to compare two different countries' pronunciations. Whoever came up with that idea is a genius.

5 Quizlet

Let's move on to number five. It is Quizlet, such a good app, perfect for teachers and students. If you want to learn lots and lots of vocabulary, but you don't know where to start, this is the perfect place for you. On this app and website, you can create flashcards. Flashcards have been used for years and years, decades, centuries to learn languages. It's a **no-brainer**, it's a perfect tool. But wonderfully, you can also search through other flashcards sets made by other students or other teachers as well. They make them public.

You can search for anything. You can search for politics vocabulary. You could search for gardening vocabulary, whatever you like. If you're studying to be a doctor, you could study medical vocabulary. There is so much there. They also have some games too, which are really fun.



I like to **gamify** the learning process. It's also really nice when you create a set that you're really, really proud of. You can share it with other people. Lots of teachers now use it with their students, leave them public. So you can gain access to a lesson that you maybe wouldn't have access to before.

6 Spotify

Moving on to number six, this is different to what I've recommended before. I always used to recommend the BBC Sounds app as a really good place for audios like podcasts and radio shows. But there was one thing that I didn't like about that app. They really didn't prioritise transcripts for their audio shows. That annoys me because it's not good for accessibility. If somebody is **hard of hearing** and I've got quite a few people in my life that are hard of hearing they cannot access podcasts. And that's so sad because there's so much wonderful information in them.

It's also not that great for English learners. One of the most amazing tools is to listen to something whilst you're reading it because your brain makes connections. It helps you learn the pronunciation. It helps you improve your listening. It helps you expand your vocabulary. It's just so good. Well, Spotify has now overtaken BBC Sounds as my favourite audio app for learning English. They have recently started adding transcripts to their shows.

At the moment, it is only the original and exclusive shows. So the ones that are native to them, I guess. There aren't that many available at the moment, but those that are have the transcripts. And it's an amazing learning opportunity. I also heard that they were considering expanding this to the rest of their shows as well. So I really, really hope they do that. If you're looking for a new podcast, make sure it's one of Spotify's original or exclusive ones. And hopefully you can access their transcripts.

7 Google Translate

The last app that I have for you is Google Translate. And no, I'm not a teacher recommending that you just translate all of your essays on Google. I remember **marking** essays and it being very, very clear who had just put their essay in their own language, into Google translate because sometimes they'd make spelling mistakes and their misspelt word in Spanish would be in the middle of their English essay, and it would be very, very obvious. But that's fine. I mean, they may have been **short on time**.

The reason I'm recommending Google Translate is because of the amazing Google lens feature, where you can use your camera to translate things in **real-time**. And this is perfect if you're out and about, and you want to quickly see something, but you don't have time to type it all up. For example, if I'm in a foreign restaurant and their menu is in Chinese or something, I can just **hover** it over. This is just a fun one. It's not necessarily an English learning tool, but it's a really useful life tool, I think. And it's something I was just **blown away** by when I first saw it. I just couldn't believe that we're finally living in the future.

The End



VOCABULARY

1

et cetera

used after a list to show that there are other things that you could have mentioned

2

meta

showing awareness of itself or its genre

3

virtually

almost or very nearly, so that any slight difference is not important

4

stream

a continuous flow or supply of something

5

going round and round

If you say that something is going round and round in your head, you mean that you can't stop thinking about it.

6

niche

interesting to, aimed at, or affecting only a small number of people

7

genuinely

truly; in a way that is exactly what it appears to be and is not artificial

8

oldie, but a goodie

Something that is an oldie but goodie is something that may be old or dated, but is still considered to be of high quality, or a classic.

9

IPA

International Phonetic Alphabet; an alphabet that is used to show the pronunciation of words in any language)

10

advocate

a person who supports or speaks in favour of somebody or of a public plan or action



VOCABULARY

11

get me/someone going

to get someone excited; to get someone talking excitedly

12

in return (for something)

as a way of thanking somebody or paying them for something they have done

13

no-brainer

a decision or a problem that you do not need to think about much because it is obvious what you should do

14

gamify

to use elements of game-playing in another activity, usually in order to make that activity more interesting

15

hard of hearing

unable to hear very well

16

marking

the activity of checking and correcting the written work or exam papers of students

17

short on time

not having enough time

18

real-time

communicated, shown, presented, etc. at the same time as events actually happen

19

hover

to float or be suspended over someone or something

20

blown away

to impress somebody a lot or to make them very happy