

How to Speak English More Fluently

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaA_mxga3PQ (13 mins)

Speaking “fluently” means speaking “without stopping or hesitating”. There are two parts to fluency:

Physical – your mouth and tongue need to produce the sounds of English words and phrases smoothly.

Mental – your brain needs to formulate or access complete English phrases quickly.

1. Leave your Comfort Zone - Speak English!

The best way to improve your fluency is to speak to somebody, as often as possible, maybe personally, online, or even to yourself! Only speaking can improve your speaking! Similarly to a sport, you must practise regularly (a recommended minimum is two hours a week). The best way to practise speaking is to immerse yourself in the culture of an English-speaking country for many months, and avoid speaking your mother tongue during this time. But this is often not possible, due to time and/or cost restraints. So here are some other suggested activities:

- Go to English classes
- Talk to foreigners in your city
- Join groups/activities with English speakers
- Find a conversation partner online

At the start, it will be difficult, you will feel nervous and uncomfortable and you will make many mistakes. Don't worry – with time, you will feel more comfortable and make fewer mistakes. The important thing is to accept that it is difficult and simply continue. You may not notice, but you will slowly improve – maybe the people you speak with will notice it and give you feedback.

2. Speed Reading.

This is a method to improve the physical side of fluency.

- a) Find a text which is easy for you to read, and uses vocabulary which you know.
- b) Read it aloud and record your time.
- c) Read it aloud again and try to beat your time.
- d) Repeat this many times and see what your fastest time is.

3. Sing Songs.

Another good way to improve the physical side of fluency is singing. This is particularly good, because you have to sing at the speed of the song.

- a) Choose a song in English which you like and find the lyrics online.
- b) Listen to the song and sing with it.

You should begin with a slow song, and later choose something harder or faster. If you sing one song a day, your fluency will quickly improve.

4. Video Games.

Young people can learn English very quickly by playing online video games, as the majority are created by English-speaking countries. They frequently involve textual and audio interaction with other players.

5. Learn the Language in Phrases.

If you try to translate a language word by word in your head, it is unnatural, complicated and slow. In fact, you are not learning to speak English, you are learning how to translate your language to English, which is a totally different concept. If you meet a word whose translation you don't know, you hesitate, think that it's too difficult to continue, and maybe stop speaking. This method is always difficult and slow, and should be avoided.

When you speak a language, you always need to produce phrases and sentences. So it is better to learn complete phrases and use them appropriately, when you recognize a specific situation. Here are some examples:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A: How old are you? | B: I'm ____ years old. |
| A: Where are you from? | B: I'm from _____. |
| A: Thank you very much. | B: You're welcome. |
| A: What will you do tomorrow? | B: I don't know. |
| A: See you on Monday! | B: Have a nice weekend. |
| A: Where are you? | B: I'm on my way. |

If you recognize these situations and what the other person says, then you can respond quickly, correctly and fluently. Simply learn these phrases – and many more!

6. Fillers / Hesitation

When speaking continuously, many people often use "gap fillers" to maintain their fluency. These are words or short phrases which we say when we are mentally searching for words. It can be a little irritating for those involved in the conversation if they are overused, so try to avoid them. Here are some examples:

- you know
- like
- it's like
- OK
- right
- actually
- basically
- so
- well
- I mean
- do you know what I mean?

Portuguese examples:

tipo assim
né
e aí
tá ligado?

Sometimes people make hesitation sounds to fill gaps in a conversation. Try to avoid these as they are a sign of weakness and can be distracting. Here are some examples:

- ah
- er
- um

Vocabulary

1. Fluency

This is the ability of a person to deliver information, in a given language, correctly, efficiently, unambiguously and with expertise.

2. Communicative competence

This is the ability of a person to use grammar, vocabulary, good pronunciation and social knowledge appropriately when engaged in conversation.

3. Parts of speech: Pragmatics, Semantics, Syntax, Morphology, Phonology, Phonetics

