A.J. HOGE

THE WORLD'S #1 ENGLISH TEACHER

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EFFORTLESS ENGLISH

LEARN TO SPEAK ENGLISH LIKE A NATIVE

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Contents

Chapter 1: A Better Way to Learn English

Chapter 2: The Problem with Schools

Chapter 3: Psychology Is More Important Than Grammar and Vocabulary

Chapter 4: Your Beliefs Determine Your English Success

Chapter 5: English Is A Physical Sport

Chapter 6: Use Big Real World Goals To Motivate Yourself For Success

Chapter 7: Program Your Brain For English Success

Chapter 8: Babies Learn Best — The Effortless English™ Engine

Chapter 9: The First Rule – Learn Phrases Not Words

Chapter 10: The Second Rule: Grammar Study Kills Your English Speaking

Chapter 11: The Third Rule: Learn With Your Ears, Not With Your Eyes

Chapter 12: The Fourth Rule – Repetition Is The Key To Spoken Mastery

Chapter 13: The Fifth Rule: Learn Grammar Intuitively And Unconsciously

Chapter 14: The Sixth Rule: Learn Real English And Trash Your Textbooks

Chapter 15: The Seventh Rule: Learn English With Compelling Stories

Chapter 16: Your Daily English Learning Plan

Chapter 17: The Power of Pleasure Reading

Chapter 18: The Secret To Good English Writing

Chapter 19: Why You Should Not Practice Speaking

Chapter 20: English Is The Language Of International Business

Chapter 21: How To Give Powerful English Presentations

Chapter 22: English Connects You With The World

Chapter 23: The Effortless English Code and Mission

About the Author

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CHAPTER 1

A Better Way to Learn English

If you've picked up this book, chances are you've wanted to speak English for a while. Maybe you've even taken classes. You probably need English to improve your career. Maybe you want to travel internationally or study abroad. You know that English is the key to international business and international travel. So let me ask you something.

Do you feel nervous or shy when you try to speak English? Do you still struggle to understand what someone is saying to you despite years of study? Are you embarrassed about your pronunciation or worried you speak too slowly? Are you frustrated that despite all the time you've invested in learning English you still can't speak it? Despite your goals, is it difficult for you to actually use English in your job, travels, or studies? Do you sometimes feel that you'll never master spoken English?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you're not alone. In fact, you're fairly typical. Most English students feel this way. Most adult English learners are stressed and frustrated about their speaking ability. Some feel completely hopeless and feel they'll never be able to speak English powerfully. Not because they're bad at languages, but because, like you, they've been taught using the wrong methods.

The good thing is that it doesn't have to be like this. There is nothing wrong with you. You can learn to speak English naturally and with ease. You can use English effectively in your job, travels, and studies. You can feel relaxed and confident every time you speak English. In fact, as a long-time English teacher, I've helped thousands of students all over the world become fluent and powerful English

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speakers.

How did I do it? I did it using a teaching method I developed called Effortless English™. Effortless English™ enables you to learn English naturally and automatically – the way children learn before they enter school. Too often, English classes get so focused on tests, textbooks, grades and "levels," students forget why they're there in the first place. They forget about the real world goals of a more successful career and exciting international travel. With Effortless English™ you never lose sight of the fact that the ultimate goal of learning a language is communication. Instead, you learn to speak English both quickly and with more precision.

Effortless?

I understand if you're skeptical – particularly if you've been trying to learn English the traditional way. You've put in the hours: memorizing vocabulary lists, doing grammar drills, reading boring textbooks. "How?" you're thinking, "can speaking English possibly be effortless?"

Believe me, I feel your pain.

Back when I started teaching 15 years ago, my students were all excited to begin conversing in English. And I was excited to help them. At that time, I taught in the usual way. I used textbooks and I focused on teaching grammar. I thought this was the best way to teach, and none of my students complained.

I still remember one particularly intelligent student of mine from Venezuela named Gladys. Gladys was determined to speak English well. Talk about effort! Gladys attended every one of my classes. She always sat in the center of the front row. I can still picture her eager and smiling face. She took detailed notes. She listened to every word I said. She also studied at home. Every day Gladys studied

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her English textbooks for four hours or more. She also tried to learn 50 new vocabulary words by memorizing word lists. Gladys was my star student and I, too, was sure she would succeed.

Six months later, however, she still could barely speak English. Her speech was hesitant and unnatural. She constantly made grammar mistakes with even the simplest sentences. Her pronunciation was difficult to understand. She still thought in Spanish and tried to translate to and from English when she spoke. Worst of all, Gladys felt nervous every time she tried to speak English. Speaking English was a painful experience for her.

Gladys was extremely frustrated. After so much effort, she had barely improved. As her teacher, I too was frustrated. I was sure Gladys would improve quickly and couldn't understand why she had not. I followed all of the traditional teaching methods. I used the standard textbooks and the standard classroom activities. Gladys was intelligent, disciplined and consistent, and yet her English speaking barely improved.

Sadly, I realized that Gladys wasn't the only one who had not improved. Her classmates also had barely improved. It was frustrating, and I felt like a complete failure as a teacher. But when I asked my colleagues for help, it turned out they had the same problem – very few of their students were improving either! At that point, I realized something was wrong – something *is* wrong with standard methods for teaching English. The worst part for me was that everyone accepted this situation as "normal." The other teachers didn't seem to be concerned about their students' lack of progress. All the teachers were using the same methods and getting the same poor results.

In most parts of the world, students study English in school for years. Yet, the vast majority of them never learn to speak English well. After years of study, they still have trouble with real English conversations. They still feel nervous and shy about speaking.

A few years after my experience with Gladys, I got a job as an English teaching assistant in Japan. I was excited and eager to help these young students learn my language. I still remember my first day. I was sitting at the front of the class next to the main teacher, who was Japanese. As the students came into the room, they saw me and giggled nervously. They sat down and continued to shyly glance up at me. They were sweet and curious.

Then the class started. The main teacher wrote an English sentence on the board. I don't remember the exact sentence, but it was something like, "The little girl goes to school." The teacher pointed to the sentence and began to talk in Japanese. The

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students all grabbed their notebooks and began writing. Everyone was very serious.

Next, the teacher circled the word “goes.” She pointed at the word and continued speaking in Japanese. She talked and talked and talked, in Japanese. The students wrote quickly, filling their notebooks with information. Finally, the teacher drew a line from the word “goes” to the word “girl.” And then she talked more, on and on and on, in Japanese.

This continued for the entire class. The teacher drew lines, circles, and squares. She used different colored chalk. And she continued speaking Japanese.

I was totally confused. I am a native speaker of English, and I was sitting in a beginning English class. Yet I could not understand anything in the class (except for that one sentence). I was thinking to myself, “What could this teacher possibly be talking about so much? It’s just one sentence.” Yet the teacher spent an entire hour analyzing, explaining, and dissecting that one simple sentence. Finally, at the end of the class, the teacher asked me to read the sentence aloud “for pronunciation.” I read the sentence a couple of times, and that was the only real English input the students got that day.

Sadly, this same pattern repeated every day. Day by day, I watched the students’ enthusiasm and curiosity disappear. They became bored. They became stressed and confused. Every day they wrote pages of notes, mostly in Japanese. Every day the teacher talked and talked and talked, mostly in Japanese. I couldn’t understand why an English class was being taught mostly in Japanese. During the average class, the students were listening to Japanese 90% of the time or more. They heard very little English. No wonder they never learned to speak! No wonder they were frustrated and confused.

Honestly, it broke my heart to watch as the school crushed these students’ natural love of learning. It was terrible to watch them grow bored, frustrated, and stressed. And six months later, none of the students could speak to me at all, not even the simplest conversation. This kind of situation is repeated in English classes all over the world.

My experiences with Gladys and in Japan convinced me that traditional English language education is broken. I knew there had to be a better way to help my students speak English than what we were doing. So I began the search for a better way. I devoured books about English teaching. I constantly tried out new methods in my classes. I read research studies. I traveled and taught English in other parts of the world.

What surprised me was how little the actual research supported traditional teaching methods. As eminent University of Southern California linguist Stephen

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Krashen noted: “We acquire language when we understand what people tell us and what we read….there is no need for deliberate memorization.” If most of us knew, intuitively, that the best way to learn English was naturally, I wondered, why were so many teachers and students still choosing to use unnatural, ineffective and old methods of teaching?

Eventually, I went back to school and got a master’s degree in (TESOL) Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Along the way, I did more research and discovered the incredible new methods that would become the basis for the Effortless English™ program.

I also did my own informal research. I searched for excellent English speakers who had learned the language as an adult. Whenever I found such a person, I interviewed them. Over time, I noticed patterns. Most of these successful speakers were independent students who mastered spoken English outside of school. Most of them used similar methods, the very same methods supported by my master’s research. Most avoided the traditional methods used in most schools.

I changed my teaching, and when I used these new strategies in classes, my students improved quickly. I couldn’t believe it! They learned to speak easily and powerfully. And even better – they were enjoying themselves! After years of searching and experimentation, I had finally found methods that worked.

Effortless English Today

Over the years, I’ve continued to test and adapt these methods and developed the Effortless English™ system. I’ve organized the program to include seven essential rules for learning English, which have led countless students to fluency. To build on the success of my classes, I created audio courses and began offering them online to English students around the world. My audio lessons are currently bestsellers in 25 countries.

In addition, I founded the Effortless English Club™ to create an international English learning community where students can communicate with other members. I wanted to create an environment that encouraged confidence and success with English, because so many learners struggle with nervousness, shyness, frustration and fear when speaking. In fact, for many people these negative emotions are the worst part of speaking English.

In our Effortless English Club™ students are able to interact on our forums and speak with each other online. It is an extremely positive and encouraging community, where everyone is free to “play with English,” make mistakes, and communicate without fear. In my opinion, we have the best members in the world.

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Every one of our members is focused not only on their own success, but also on helping other members achieve success too. The result is a supportive “family” of learners and international leaders.

This book is another resource for students looking to speak English powerfully and fluently. It is designed to guide you on the road to fluency, to speed your journey to confident, powerful, effortless speaking. In this book, you will learn how to re-program your negative emotions about English, develop confidence when speaking, and follow a powerful and effective road to fluency. You’ll also learn how to use English to improve your career and achieve the success you want.

Over the next several chapters, I will describe the Effortless English™ system in detail, explain the philosophy behind it, and tell you why both psychology and method are important for language learning. I’ll also tell you exactly how to use the system to reach your goals.

Join me and enjoy the journey. You really have nothing to fear by leaving the old education system behind. So let go of the pressure, the stress, the fear and the boredom. I promise you this natural learning system is fun, friendly, and energetic – the opposite of most school classrooms. There is no pressure – just friendly encouragement and support.

Trust me. I have helped students everywhere in the world… and now I am eager to help you. I promise I will always do my best to help you speak excellent English.

NOT "LAZY" ENGLISH

So what is Effortless English™? By "effortless" I certainly don't mean lazy English. On the contrary, "effortless English" is going to be the result of the work you put in every day. By following my system, you will make progress and achieve the result of speaking naturally and "effortlessly" (unforced, without stress, hesitation or nervousness).

In other words, "effortless" is the result, not the beginning. Your goal is to speak English effortlessly. You want the words to flow out without thinking, without translating, without worry or hesitation. You want to speak English just as you speak your own native language. Effortless speaking is the final result, and sometimes it takes a lot of effort to become effortless!

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It is possible, however, to thoroughly enjoy that effort. The example I like to use is that of an athlete or artist "in the zone." "In the zone" means performing excellently and effortlessly. When an athlete is "in the zone" at one level, they are working very hard – expending a lot of energy, pushing, totally focused. However, when they are enjoying themselves and completely focused, the activity FEELS effortless to them. There is no feeling of forcing, straining, etc.

In fact, the name Effortless English™ was inspired by the Taoist idea of "wu wei" or effortless effort. It's a description of that flow state where you can be expending a lot of effort and yet it feels totally effortless and natural, not forced.

So the point is that Effortless English™ is not about laziness, quick fixes, or impossible scams... but rather about finding that state of "effortless effort" or "wu wei." Effortless English means you speak English fluently. You don't struggle as you speak. You don't feel nervous or stressed. You don't think about grammar rules or translations.

When you speak English effortlessly, you communicate your ideas clearly. You express your feelings powerfully. You focus on connecting with other people, not on conjugating verbs. You thoroughly enjoy the process of speaking English as you work, travel and learn.

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CHAPTER 2

The Problem with Schools

My teaching experiences in different parts of the world convinced me that something is wrong with English education. Everywhere I went, it was the same situation. The students were bored, frustrated, stressed, and nervous. Most students, even after years of studying English, failed to speak the language fluently. You are not alone, because it's a global problem.

One of my students, Seiko from Japan, described this combination of failure and stress as "English trauma." Seiko said that she hated English. She felt that learning English was boring and stressful and speaking English was even worse. In fact, the thought of speaking to a native speaker immediately made Seiko feel extremely nervous and shy. Seiko felt she had developed a psychological problem with English and had named it "English trauma." A "trauma" is a deep wound or injury. "How sad," I thought to myself, "that so many people now think of English as a kind of injury or mental disease."

Throughout my teaching career I've met many students who had similar feelings about English. I discovered that Seiko was not alone. Rather, "English trauma" is a global epidemic. Though most people feel they must learn to speak English, very few seem to enjoy it. Most who learn the language struggle with the same feelings of nervousness and frustration that Seiko had.

As I encountered this problem more and more, I began to look for the root causes. I realized that before I found a solution, I needed to understand the problem. Just as a doctor must first diagnose a disease before treating it. Think about it. What is the cause of all this misery and failure? Why do so many people fail to speak English effortlessly despite years of study? What is wrong with English education?

The first and most obvious problem I found with schools was the way in which they teach English. Most schools, everywhere in the world, use the grammar translation method. As the name implies, the focus of this method is on grammar analysis and the memorization of translated vocabulary. This method breaks English into an endless series of grammar formulas to memorize. Of course, each grammar formula has exceptions and these must be memorized too.

Schools like the grammar translation method because it appears to be serious, academic and complex. The grammar translation method fits the way schools teach

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most subjects — with textbooks, lectures, notes, memorization, and tests. The only problem, as you know, is that it doesn't work. In real conversations, there simply is no time to think about grammar formulas and their exceptions. The failure rate for this method, therefore, is absolutely horrible. Despite the failure of most students to speak English fluently, schools continue to use this method. This is an epic failure of our education system.

Recently, because students find the grammar translation method so boring, some schools have added "communication activities" to their curriculum. Occasionally, the teacher puts the students into pairs or groups. The students then read or repeat dialogues from a textbook. Sometimes they might answer a few questions from a worksheet. Of course, these activities are unnatural, nothing like real English conversation. Consequently, the failure rate of "communication activities" is just as bad as grammar translation.

Obviously the English teaching methods used in schools do not work. That was easy to see. I knew it. The students knew it. And many teachers know it too, though few will admit it.

However, as I continued to investigate the problem with schools, I found even deeper problems in the education system. These problems are less obvious, but in many ways far more damaging to the students. I call these problems "the hidden curriculum" because they are the hidden lessons taught by schools.

The Hidden Curriculum

Most schools, everywhere in the world, share a similar hidden curriculum. One element of this curriculum is student passivity. In schools, students are trained to be passive, not active. They sit in chairs, in rows. When they are young, they are told to be quiet and obey the teacher. As the teacher lectures, the students take notes. Later, they are told to memorize these notes in preparation for a test. The message is clear — learning is a passive activity. You listen to the teacher, you take notes, you memorize the notes.

The problem is that speaking English is not a passive activity. You must connect with other people. You must constantly ask and answer questions. You must communicate ideas, emotions, and descriptions. You must be ready for the unexpected. You must be spontaneous. You must actively interact. English is not something you passively study, it's something you do.

Related to the problem of passivity is the issue of energy. Sitting for a long time is a low-energy activity. The longer you sit, the more your energy drops. And as your energy drops, so does your concentration. What's worse, we know that some

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learners need physical movement in order to learn effectively. These people are called “kinesthetic learners.” The truth is we are all “kinesthetic learners” to some degree, because we all benefit from physical movement. Schools stick us in chairs and drain our energy. Eventually, an inactive body leads to an inactive mind.

The One Right Answer Mentality

One of the greatest flaws of school education is the idea of “one right answer.” One right answer is a powerful part of the hidden curriculum. It is a result of using textbooks and tests.

In school, you are frequently taught that there is one, and only one, correct answer to a question or problem. For example, you may be asked to choose the correct verb tense on a test, or you may be taught “proper” English greetings. The hidden message is that the teacher’s way is always right.

Real life, and real English, is not this way. For example, sometimes I will tell a story using the present tense, even though the events happened in the past. This is a technique commonly used by native speakers. However, when English learners hear these stories, many are confused and upset. They are convinced that the past tense is the “right answer” and the only correct way to tell the story. Some get quite upset and even argue with me about it. These students are so convinced that there is only “one right answer” that they will argue with native speakers!

These students have been trained to believe that there is only one correct way to say things in English. The truth is there are always many ways to say the same thing. We can change verb tenses in order to change the feeling of the story. We can use different vocabulary and different phrases. And we even break grammar rules all the time! ‘One right answer’ thinking limits and confuses English learners. Effective communication requires flexibility while the “one right answer” mentality trains students to be rigid and unimaginative.

Connected to this problem is another dangerous part of the hidden curriculum — fear of mistakes. This is one of the most negative and traumatizing messages taught in schools. How is the fear of mistakes taught? Through tests and corrections. In nearly every school all over the world, teachers regularly give quizzes and tests. The teacher asks questions and the students must provide the one right answer. Of course, the one right answer is always the teacher’s answer.

What happens if the student provides a different answer? They are punished with a lower score. Students are smart, and they quickly understand that in school, mistakes are bad and must be avoided. They also understand that truth is unimportant and the best way to succeed is to simply give the answer that the teacher wants. Even worse

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is when a student, already feeling nervous, tries to speak English with the whole class listening. They are just learning, so of course they will make mistakes. When the teacher corrects these mistakes, the student is embarrassed and becomes even more nervous. Eventually, most students try to avoid speaking English because the situation is so painful.

By punishing and correcting mistakes, schools punish risk taking. Little by little, they train students to avoid risk and avoid doing anything they can't do perfectly. Yet there is no perfection with English speaking. Even native speakers make mistakes. We make grammar mistakes. We mispronounce words. We forget vocabulary words. It doesn't matter, because we are focused on communicating, not on tests and grades.

Of course, the fear of mistakes goes far beyond English class. After years of school, most people learn to avoid risk in most parts of their life. School trains them to be passive, rigid, timid, and obedient. This not only hurts your English speaking, it also harms your career and limits your success in all areas of life. Fortune favors the bold. Those who are active, flexible, and passionate are the ones who achieve the greatest success in life. The passive and obedient rarely live their dreams.

You will make many mistakes as you improve your English speaking. There is no need to be upset by this. The truth is, most native speakers don't care. They don't care if you make grammar mistakes. They just want to communicate with you. They want to share thoughts, ideas and feelings. They want to communicate with you as a human being, not as an "English student." To communicate effectively, you must forget the idea of perfection and learn to be flexible.

The Dirty Secret of English Teaching

If the hidden curriculum is so bad, why do schools and teachers continue to follow it? The truth about our education system is that the curriculum exists to benefit the schools, not the students. Teachers use these methods because they are easier for the teacher, not because they are good for the student. The hidden curriculum creates passive students. It creates obedient students. Passive and obedient students are easier to control, making life easier for teachers and school administrators.

Textbooks, for example, make the teacher's job much easier. By using a textbook, the teacher doesn't have to plan new lessons for every class. Planning lessons is hard work, and a textbook makes it much easier. The teacher can simply follow the textbook with minimum effort. Many teachers are little more than textbook readers. Every day they read the textbook to their students, slavishly following the lessons. In

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my opinion, they can barely be called “teachers” at all. Perhaps we should call them “textbook readers” instead.

Another benefit of textbooks, for the schools, is that they standardize learning. By using a textbook, the school ensures that every English class is learning exactly the same thing. School officials like this because it makes testing and ranking students easier. Schools are like factories, the bosses want everything to be the same.

The same is true for tests and grades. These provide little to no benefit to English learners. In fact, as we have discussed, tests and grades increase stress and create a fear of making mistakes. Tests and grades are a primary cause of “English trauma.” On the other hand, tests and grades are a powerful tool of control for teachers. When students fear bad grades, they obey the teacher more. They learn that the teacher is always right, because if they don’t agree with the teacher’s answer they are punished with lower scores.

Grades are a means of ranking students. Most teachers and administrators are focused on ranking students rather than helping all succeed. In many schools, the official policy is that a certain percentage of students in every class must get poor grades, a certain percentage must get “medium level” grades, and only a small percentage can be given excellent grades. In other words, the system is designed to create failure for a large number of students.

While working at a university in Thailand, I was told directly by my boss that too many of my students had high scores. My boss insisted that I fail more students in my class. I was shocked and angry. I quit the job rather than purposely fail dedicated students. Sadly, this mentality of “designing for failure” is present in most school everywhere in the world. Schools benefit from ranking and controlling students.

The grammar translation method also benefits the teacher but not the student. By teaching grammar rules, the teacher can simply lecture from the textbook. Because linguistics is a complicated subject, the teacher appears knowledgeable and thus establishes a position of superiority over the students. Even if the teacher is a non-native speaker with terrible English ability, he or she can pretend to be an expert by teaching complex grammar from a book. The shocking truth is that many non-native English teachers, in fact, speak English very poorly. By focusing on grammar they disguise their inability to speak well.

What about communication activities? Surely they are designed to help students. Actually, they are not. These activities, as we discussed previously, are unnatural. They are nothing like a real conversation, and thus do not prepare students to have real conversations. However, communication activities are great for teachers. The teacher puts the students into pairs or groups and asks them to follow a textbook

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activity. Often, the students simply read a written dialogue from the book or answer pre-written questions from the book. The advantage for the teacher is that once such an activity is started, the teacher can rest and do nothing. While the students go through the textbook activity, the teacher relaxes. It's a secret among English teachers that communication activities are a great way to waste time and avoid work.

One particularly horrible version of communication activities is the use of movies. Used correctly, movies can be a powerful English learning tool. Most teachers, however, simply use movies as a way to waste time. They put in a movie, turn out the lights, and push play. For the remainder of the class, the teacher happily does nothing. The students are usually happy, too, because watching a movie is far more interesting than grammar, even if they can't understand most of the film.

Passive Low Energy Benefits the Teacher

Finally, let's look at the low energy situation in most schools. From childhood, students are forced to sit for hours, motionless in chairs. They are told to be quiet and obedient. By adulthood, most people are thoroughly trained. They accept passive lectures and low energy as a normal part of learning.

Why would schools and teachers want low energy? Again, because low energy students are easier to manage. A teacher must work much harder with curious, energetic students. Sadly, most teachers prefer the easy way. It's much easier for them to lecture quietly to passive students.

The truth is that many teachers are tired and stressed. Because of this, they constantly look for ways to make their own job easier. Their first concern is not the students. They are not obsessively focused on getting better results for the learners. Rather, they just want to get through their workday as easily as possible. There are many reasons for this situation, but the end result for the student is boredom, frustration, and poor results.

This is the ugly truth of education. This is the reason you cannot speak English well, despite years of study. This is the reason you find English to be stressful, difficult, and boring. This is the cause of English trauma. This is the source of the problem.

Happily, there is a solution. The Internet has made independent learning easy for all. No matter where you live or what you do, it is possible to master spoken English without schools. All you need is an Internet connection!

In the next chapter, I will introduce the solution to English trauma. You will learn how to heal and how to finally get the results you want with English speaking.

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CHAPTER 3

Psychology Is More Important Than Grammar and Vocabulary

Most people have suffered with English for so long they worry there is no solution. Trained by schools to be passive, fear mistakes, and search for just one right answer, most English learners are stressed and frustrated. Some feel nearly hopeless. They have spent years in English classrooms. They have spent years memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary lists. They have spent years studying for exams such as the TOEFL, IELTS, or TOEIC.

Despite all this work and effort, most English learners are frustrated. Many struggle with even simple conversations. Many feel nervous any time they must speak English. They have memorized countless grammar rules, yet even simple conversations feel difficult. Likewise, despite years of study, most learners still cannot understand American TV or movies.

After so many years of traditional learning, students are confused. When they try to speak, they constantly think about grammar and translations. First they think of a sentence in their own language, then they translate it to English, then they think about the grammar, and finally they speak.

When they listen, they go through a similar process. They hear the English, translate it into their own language, think of a response in their own language, translate their response into English, and then think about the grammar to be sure their response is correct. No wonder their speech is so slow and unnatural! No wonder English feels so stressful and difficult! Real conversations are fast, and it's nearly impossible to do all of this thinking fast enough, especially when talking to a native speaker.

If you think about translations and grammar during a real conversation, you will quickly become lost. Instead of listening carefully to the other person, you'll be translating your own responses and trying to remember grammar. Your speech will be hesitant. Often, the other person will become frustrated by your lack of understanding. Of course, if you see the other person is losing patience, you will usually become even more nervous. It's a terrible downward spiral that most English learners know too well.

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There is a solution. There is a way to escape the hidden curriculum. There is a road to English fluency and you can travel on it. You can speak English powerfully. You can speak English clearly, naturally, and effortlessly. This solution, however, will require you to completely change your beliefs about education and completely change the way you learn English.

I call the solution the Effortless English™ system and it has two parts: the psychology and the method. Most schools, most teachers, and most learners focus only on method. In other words, they are solely focused on the pieces of the English language — vocabulary and grammar. As we learned in the last chapter, schools primarily use the "grammar translation" method, with some "communication activities" added.

While schools are focused just on method, they completely ignore the first part of the Effortless English™ system — the psychology. Yet, psychology is probably the most important element for success with English speaking. When you think of your own English speaking, you'll realize that your nervousness, lack of confidence, and frustration are major problems. How do you change these?

Without an effective psychological system, you will struggle to find success with even the best language teaching method. Let's use a story to understand these two important parts of the Effortless English™ system. Imagine that you are on a road. You are driving on the road to English fluency.

What kind of car would you want? Let's say all you have to drive is an old slow car that often breaks down. In addition, you fill this old car with cheap gasoline. What kind of trip will you have? How fast will you go on this road to fluency? Most likely, your trip will be slow and frustrating, with frequent breakdowns. In fact, you probably will not reach your destination.

Now, you could put some high quality gas in that old car, but even then it will likely take you a long time to reach your destination. Better gas will help a little, but the trip is still likely to be slow and frustrating.

Now imagine instead that you'll be driving a Formula 1 racing car on this road to fluency. This car is made for speed and performance. Clearly, it will go faster than the old, slow car. But what if you fill it up with cheap, low quality fuel? There will likely be problems. Racing cars need racing fuel or they will not perform well.

Obviously, the best situation would be to put high quality racing fuel into your Formula 1 racing car! With this car and this fuel, your trip on the road to fluency will be fast and exciting.

This is how learning English works. If you've been studying for a while, you know by now that there are all sorts of systems. Traditional classes at universities.

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Private lessons from language schools. Online or packaged software courses. Immersion programs that put you in the country where they speak the language you're studying. In other words, you've got a lot of different cars to choose from. Some may be better than others, some may be faster. But even the greatest of these methods, the Ferrari of language teaching, if you will, needs fuel to make it work.

A method, after all, is only an engine. And if you don't give an engine the proper fuel, even a great one won't work the way you'd like it to. To succeed, you need both quality fuel and a powerful engine.

The right engine + the right fuel = success

Obviously, I believe the right engine would be the Effortless English™ system.

What is the fuel? The fuel is your psychology. It is the beliefs, emotions, and goals that power your learning. Your fuel is your motivation, your confidence, your energy, your enthusiasm.

Your Fuel: Success Psychology

If your psychology is weak, even the best method will fail. In other words, if you have connected stress, fear, nervousness, and doubt to the process of speaking English you will have a lot of problems. Unfortunately, this is exactly what happens in most schools. The tests, the error corrections, and the boring and ineffective methods used in schools combine to create powerful negative emotions in most students.

Even if you're using my Effortless English™ method, you must have strong psychology. Unless you bring the proper emotional energy to the language-learning process, it won't be enough.

The Effortless English™ system is based upon a success psychology system known as Neuro-Linguistic Programming, or NLP. Developed by Richard Bandler and John Grinder, NLP is focused on the psychology of success, high-performance, and motivation. Rather than study mentally ill people, Bandler and Grinder researched the psychology of the most successful people in the world. They then created a psychological system designed to help individuals achieve the highest levels of success and happiness in their lives.

What Bandler and Grinder found was that happy, motivated and energetic people actually learn better. They perform better. They achieve more success in all aspects of their lives. The opposite is also true: If you're feeling bored, stressed, sad, frustrated or even tired, your brain actually functions more slowly and has a harder

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time remembering information.

Clearly, it is important to connect positive, rather than negative, emotions to the process of learning and speaking English. The process of connecting emotions to an experience or process is called anchoring. Anchoring can be positive or negative. For example, imagine that you listen to a specific song when you are feeling extremely happy. If the emotion is strong enough, a connection will be formed between the song and the emotion. And if you are feeling very happy when you hear the song again, that connection will become stronger.

Eventually, you will create a very strong connection between the song and the feeling of happiness. At that point, anytime you hear the song you will automatically find yourself feeling happy. That's what happens with your favorite songs and that's great!

However, this process also works with negative emotions. Imagine that you have a stressful experience in English class. Maybe the teacher corrects one of your errors when you are speaking and you feel embarrassed. Now imagine that you continue to have a series of negative emotional experiences in English classes. You frequently feel bored, nervous and stressed while learning and using English.

Eventually, a strong connection forms between English and the negative emotions. This is a negative anchor. Once this is formed, whenever you try to use English you will automatically begin to feel more nervous and stressed. This is why many "advanced" English learners still have so much trouble when trying to speak.

Sadly, most learners now have powerful negative anchors connected to their English speaking. The good news is that negative anchors can be broken and reprogrammed. This, in fact, is your first step towards speaking English powerfully.

Instead of feeling nervous, imagine if you suddenly and automatically felt powerful every time you spoke English? What if you automatically felt more excited every time you learned English? This change alone would improve your speaking.

Through the power of anchoring, you can indeed connect these powerful emotions to English. The secret to breaking a negative anchor and creating a new positive one is intensity. The more powerful an emotion is felt (while using English), the faster and deeper the connection.

So, to create a strong positive anchor for English requires a few steps.

First, you must create a very intense positive emotion. Most people believe that emotions are something that happen to them, but in fact, we create our emotions. It is possible to choose your emotions and to create them consciously.

For example, if you wished to feel tired and sad right now, what would you do?

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Let’s start with your body. How would you use your body to create a tired and sad feeling? Would you pull your shoulders back, or hunch them forward? Would you look up or down? Would you smile or frown? In fact, by simply changing your body you would change your feelings.

To make yourself feel even worse, you would think about sad and negative things. Perhaps you would think about a big problem you have, or about a big regret. And what about your voice? You could moan, cry, or whine, and that would make you feel even worse.

After doing all of the above for a few minutes, you would genuinely begin to feel sadder and more tired. This is how you consciously can create a negative emotion.

Of course, this process works for positive emotions too, and that is good news! How would you make yourself feel more excited right now? Again, start with the body. Pull your shoulders back and push your chest up and out. Bring your head up and look straight ahead. Put a big smile on your face and hold it.

Next, change your thoughts. Think about something great in your life. Think about the biggest success you have ever had. Think about your future success speaking English powerfully. Smile bigger. First you are just pretending, but eventually you will feel stronger and happier. That’s because your emotions change when your body changes. It’s a simple technique.

Of course, you can feel even better by using your body even more. Instead of just standing and smiling, raise your arms over your head. Then jump in the air like you are celebrating a big victory. And use your voice. Shout and cheer loudly as you jump and smile and think of wonderful things. Go crazy! This is called a “peak emotional state,” an intensely powerful positive emotion.

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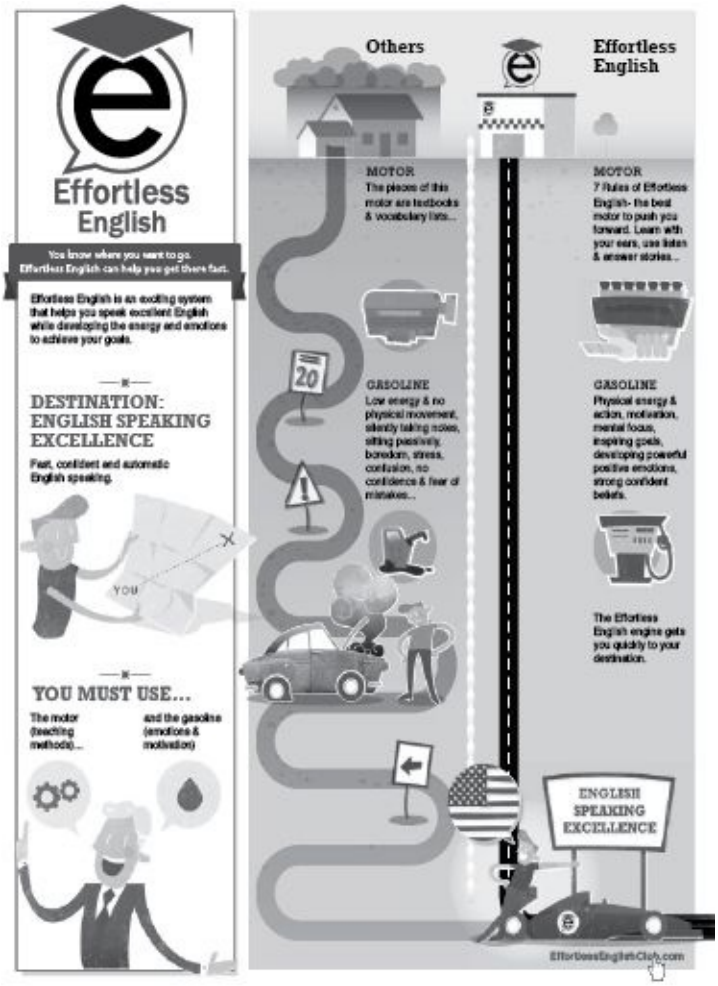

The final step, of course, is to connect this great feeling to English. So, still feeling great, immediately start listening to an easy English audio. As you are listening, continue to smile and move your body in a strong, positive way.

Each day, just before you begin learning English, you will create this peak emotion. As you repeat this process every day, these strong, positive feelings will become connected to English. Eventually, every time you hear or use English you will automatically feel energized, positive and excited. You have broken the old negative anchor and replaced it with a new positive one.

And there is more good news. Research has shown that people who are excited and energized while learning actually learn more quickly. They remember more and they remember longer. They perform better. In fact, you will speak English better right now simply by being in a peak emotional state. Creating this positive anchor to English, therefore, is your first step to faster travel on the road to fluency.

Why Happy Students Learn More

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Dr. Stephen Krashen, a linguist at the University of Southern California and one of the top researchers on second language learning, believes negative emotions act as a filter, reducing the amount of new language input you're able to learn. As a result, students who feel bad, anxious or worried remember less vocabulary and don't speak as well. Essentially, they learn more slowly.

The best way to counter this, Krashen says, is by keeping students interested, reducing stress in classrooms and boosting learners' self-confidence.

In one study, researchers found that when they compared the performance of students who were energized and enjoying themselves in class with the performance of students who were just being drilled in material, the energized students did better. The same was true when they tested these students again at three months and later at six months.

I see the same thing in our Effortless English Club™ community. When you look at our most successful members, you'll find a common factor. They are all extremely enthusiastic. They have a lot of energy. They're very, very positive. They have very strong positive emotions. When you use peak emotions you can speak better – right now.

Therefore, each and every time you study English, create a peak emotional state. Change your body and your mental focus in order to create excitement and positive energy. Build a strong anchor, a strong connection, between English and your most positive emotions. Heal your English trauma.

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CHAPTER 4

Your Beliefs Determine Your English Success

In the last chapter, you learned the importance of fuel, or psychology, for English speaking success. You also learned how to anchor (connect) strong positive emotions to English.

In addition to peak emotions, there is another important element of psychology that you must master in order to speak English powerfully: belief. Beliefs are our most powerful "brain programs." They guide our decisions, our feelings, and our thoughts. They tell us what is possible and what is not. They open us to success or limit us to failure.

We can put beliefs into two general categories: limiting beliefs and empowering beliefs. A limiting belief is typically a negative "program" that limits your potential and performance. In other words, limiting beliefs limit your success.

The hidden curriculum is the source of most negative beliefs about English. Over time, schools consistently program limiting beliefs into the minds of their students. After years in school, most students share some or all of these limiting beliefs:

- English is complicated and difficult.
- It takes many years to speak English well.
- English is stressful.
- Grammar study is the key to English speaking.
- I'm not good at English.
- There is one right answer. There is one right way to say it.
- Something is wrong with me because I still can't speak English well.
- My test scores are low, therefore I can't speak English well.
- The best way to learn English is to sit in a class, take notes, and read a textbook.
- Only a few special people can learn to speak English powerfully.
- English learning is boring and frustrating.

The problem with these negative beliefs is that they lead to negative emotions (about English). The negative beliefs and emotions then lead to bad decisions, and the bad decisions lead to disappointing results.

For example, someone who believes that English is stressful, complicated, and

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difficult is unlikely to be motivated to work hard every day. Rather, they will constantly be struggling to force themselves to learn English.

Someone who feels only a few special people can master English will likely become frustrated very quickly. They will assume that something is wrong with them, that they are “not good at English.” Again, their progress will be slow.

Finally, those who believe that classes, textbooks and grammar study are the key may spend years using these ineffective methods, driving their old slow car on the road to fluency and never achieving success.

This is why beliefs are so important. They are the central programs in our brain that create feelings, decisions and actions. Beliefs are what make the difference between ultimate success or a lifetime of frustration with English.

Beliefs tell you what an experience means. Whenever you have an English language experience, your brain must decide the meaning of what happened. In other words, your brain generalizes the experience. Your brain decides what the event means to your life as a whole. And with each negative experience, the belief can grow stronger and stronger. Eventually you become completely certain about the belief.

For example, maybe you were repeatedly corrected by an English teacher. After each of these embarrassing experiences, your brain had to decide the meaning of what happened. Based on these events, maybe you decided that you were bad at English. Maybe you decided that English was painful and stressful. Each negative experience made the belief stronger.

The problem is that these beliefs then affected all of your English experiences that followed. So whenever you had another encounter with English, it was always with these negative limiting beliefs. Because of this, you automatically viewed every new experience with English more negatively. If your beliefs are strongly negative and you don’t change them, you can completely destroy your ability to succeed as an English speaker. Many English learners completely lose hope and simply quit, never to succeed.

You must, therefore, replace your limiting beliefs with strong empowering ones. “Empowering” means “giving power.” So an empowering belief is one that gives you power!

What kind of empowering beliefs do you need for English speaking success?

Here is a sample list:

- English is easy, fun and exciting.
- I can speak English fluently in about six months.
- Mistakes are normal and necessary. Even native speakers make mistakes.

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- Communication, not a test score, is the purpose of English speaking.
- Grammar study kills English speaking.
- Anyone can learn to speak English powerfully.
- There's nothing wrong with me, I've just been using a bad method and I can change that.

I'm sure you can see how much stronger these beliefs are. You can see that these beliefs are more likely to create success than the limiting ones. You can probably imagine the greater feelings of confidence and excitement that these beliefs create. But how do you create these beliefs? Clearly the empowering beliefs are more desirable, but how do you truly re-program your mind?

One powerful method for changing beliefs is called modeling. Modeling simply means to find a successful person and study them carefully. If you want to speak English powerfully, for example, you find another person who has learned to do it. You learn about them. You learn what they did and how they did it. If possible, you talk to them and learn about their psychology and their methods. Finally, of course, you do your best to do exactly what they did.

The more you model successful people, the more your beliefs will change automatically. By focusing on success instead of failure, you gradually re-program your brain. This is why I created the Effortless English Club™. In our community, the most successful members guide and advise newer members. While I hope this book will help to change your beliefs, there is nothing more powerful than hearing from another person, just like you, who achieved success.

Your job now is to find successful English speakers and model them. You might find them in your town. You will certainly find them online. When you do find them, ask them about their beliefs and methods. Study their psychology and their success. This is exactly what I did when I developed the Effortless English™ system. I studied the most successful English learners. I interviewed them. I studied their emotions, their beliefs, their goals, and their learning methods. That is how I created a system based on success, not failure.

Remember, beliefs are created by the meaning we attach to experiences. The more you focus on and think about negative experiences, the stronger the limiting beliefs become. You can make empowering beliefs stronger in the same way. In other words, you can use "selective memory" to create and strengthen your positive beliefs.

How do you do this? Simply by reviewing all of your past experiences with English. As you remember all of your past experiences, search your memory for any that were positive. Maybe you remember a fun activity. Maybe you enjoyed

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reading a short story in English. When you remember these positive experiences, write them down. Create a list of all the positive experiences you have ever had with English.

Most people can identify at least a few such experiences. The next step is to focus your attention on these memories every day. Each day, review your list of positive English memories. Remember each experience. See each one in your mind and feel those positive feelings again.

Then write down a new empowering belief about English. You might write "English is easy and fun." You might write "I enjoy learning English and I'm good at it." Write this belief at the top of your list and also review it each day.

And of course, every time you have a new positive experience with English, add it to your list. Your list will grow longer and longer. And as it grows, your empowering beliefs will get stronger and stronger.

We all know the computer programming term "garbage in, garbage out." Beliefs are our brain programs. Garbage (negative limiting) beliefs create negative emotions, bad decisions, and low motivation. These, in turn, create "garbage out" – terrible results. Those bad results then create new and stronger negative beliefs, and the whole cycle starts again, even worse. This is called a "downward spiral."

Positive beliefs, on the other hand, create an upward spiral. Empowering beliefs create more positive emotions, better decisions, and better motivation. These, in turn, create better results. Better results then create even stronger empowering beliefs. The whole cycle repeats again and again, getting stronger each time. This upward spiral is the key to rapid success with English.

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CHAPTER 5

English Is A Physical Sport

One of the greatest errors of the hidden curriculum is that schools teach English as an academic subject. In school you study English. You learn about English. You analyze the parts of the language (grammar, vocabulary, etc.). You take tests about this knowledge.

The problem is, English is not a subject to be studied. English is a skill to be performed or "played." Speaking is something you do, not something you analyze and think about. Perhaps you can see the problem.

Real English conversations are very fast and they are unpredictable. The other person speaks quickly and you never know exactly what they will say. You must be able to listen, understand, and respond almost instantly. There simply is no time to think about grammar, translations, or anything else you learned in English class.

English conversation is more like playing soccer (football). A soccer player must act and react almost instantly. The player must play the game intuitively. Soccer players do not study physics formulas in order to play well. They learn by doing. They "play" soccer, they don't "study" it.

Studying grammar rules to speak English is much like a soccer player studying physics to play soccer. It might be interesting (or not!), but it certainly won't help performance. Your job, therefore, is to stop "studying" English and start "playing" it!

Remember that your fuel is an important part, perhaps the most important part, of your Effortless English™ engine. Learning to play English, rather than study it, is a powerful way to develop strong psychology and go much faster on the road to fluency.

When we first discussed fuel, we learned how to use our bodies to change our emotions. It turns out the body is, in fact, a very important (and neglected) key to learning English. By using physical actions while learning, it is possible to learn faster, remember more, remember longer and speak better.

Dr. James Asher, a psychologist and professor emeritus at San José State University, found that using physical actions in language class actually helps students learn vocabulary better. Dr. Asher became curious about the link between language and movement after watching how young children learned to speak. He

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noticed that when parents said something, their children typically would respond with a word and some sort of action. He also noticed that parents frequently used actions and gestures while speaking to their babies.

Based on his research and observations, Asher developed the Total Physical Response system of language teaching in which students respond to teacher commands in the new language with whole body actions. These actions strengthen the meaning of the phrase and make it easier to remember. Dr. Asher believes that students can learn 12 to 36 words in an hour using this method. I've had similar success using a version of it in my lessons and seminars.

Of course, this is the complete opposite of what happens in most English classes. In school, you are told to sit still in your chair. You sit for an hour or more. Naturally, the longer you sit, the more your energy drops. As your energy drops, your concentration drops, too. And as your concentration drops, you learn less and forget more. Of course, this lower energy frequently leads to feelings of boredom. Less movement, less energy, lower concentration, and boredom naturally produce worse results, no matter what the method is, and so we have another downward spiral.

While everyone benefits from physical learning, some people absolutely need it. These people are called "kinesthetic learners." They learn best when they connect learning to physical movement. This kind of learner tends to struggle in traditional classrooms, where they are required to sit motionless for hours. Schools and teachers often label these people as being "learning disabled" or as having "attention deficit disorder."

The problem, however, is not that "kinesthetic learners" are disabled. Rather, the problem is a teaching disability — the failure of schools to teach active learners in an effective way.

My Effortless English™ seminars and classes are quite different. Many have described them as "English rock concerts." In an Effortless English™ seminar, we frequently jump, dance, shout, laugh, and move. In fact, it is rare for learners to sit for more than 15 minutes in one of my seminars. I want them moving. I want them energized. Because I know that active and energized people learn faster, learn more, remember longer and perform better!

Remember, English is a performance skill, not a subject you study. The more you use your body while learning, the more success you will achieve. One way to use movement while learning English is to use the Action Vocabulary method. In this method, you connect a unique physical movement to a new vocabulary word. You shout the word (or phrase) and perform the movement. The movement should

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remind you of the meaning of the word.

By doing this repeatedly, you connect the word, its meaning, and the unique physical action. This combination creates a stronger and deeper memory, resulting in faster and deeper vocabulary learning. This is far more effective than simply trying to memorize long lists of words.

Another simple way to use your body is to walk while learning English. With a smart phone you can make your learning mobile! Instead of sitting on your butt, slowly losing energy, put on your headphones and go for a walk while listening to English. As you walk, your heart will pump and your brain will get more blood. You'll feel more energy and thus you will concentrate better. You'll probably enjoy learning more, too.

There is no reason to be limited by the old school methods. You do not need to sit motionless in a chair while you learn. You do not need to remain silent. You do not need to be bored and tired. As an independent learner, you are free to learn in the way that is most effective and most enjoyable for you. You are the master of your own learning. Enjoy it!

Remember the peak emotion exercise you learned? This is another excellent way to use your body while learning English. Take a short "energy break." Play your favorite energetic music. Jump, shout, smile, cheer and dance for a couple of minutes. Fully energize your body and create peak emotions. Then continue learning English. Take these energy breaks every 20-30 minutes every time you learn English. I guarantee you will get better results.

Watch children when they are playing. They are happy, energetic and active. Children learn best while playing. They bring an attitude of play to everything they do. Small children don't need much effort or discipline. They are energized by curiosity. They learn actively. They learn by playing and play while learning.

It is time for you to rediscover these natural qualities. As an adult, you still learn best in this way. You, too, benefit from being active and energized while learning. You, too, benefit from physical movement and an attitude of play. As you use the techniques and methods in this book, always do so with a fun and playful attitude!

There are two major parts to the Effortless English™ system: the psychology and the method. You know that psychology is the fuel that makes the engine go. You must develop that fuel to create higher and higher energy for learning. You have learned how to use peak emotion anchoring, beliefs, and physical movement to create that fuel. You have learned the importance of an active, playful attitude.

In the next chapter, you will learn another psychological technique for creating the most powerful fuel possible for English learning.

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(See below)

ACTION VOCABULARY

So many students waste time trying to memorize English vocabulary. They study long lists of words. They repeat the lists many times, trying to memorize the English words and their translated meanings. Unfortunately, research shows that 80% of vocabulary learned in this way is forgotten in less than a year. That's a lot of wasted time and effort.

There's another problem with this vocabulary learning method — it's boring, and it kills long-term motivation. As a student, you must be very careful— killing your motivation is the worst thing you can do. Learning English is a marathon, it's a long run. It requires high levels of motivation that are sustained for many years.

Using boring vocabulary learning methods, therefore, is doubly bad: it is inefficient and it weakens motivation.

There is a better way, as participants in my breakthrough seminars have found out. It is possible to learn new vocabulary in a way that is far more powerful AND is a lot of fun. When you learn in this way, studies show that you can remember 80% one year later! That's powerful.

The key to deep, powerful, long term vocabulary learning is movement. When you combine strong physical movements with understandable new vocabulary, you create deep connections in your brain and body. These connections are long term. They last! The key is to use a movement that reminds you of the meaning of the vocabulary.

For example, imagine you want to learn the phrase "to proclaim." First you would find the meaning of the word, which is "to say or announce publicly, often in a loud way." After you know the meaning, you create an action that reminds you of it. You might put your hands to your mouth and pretend you are yelling loudly ("to say publicly and loudly"). Finally, you would shout the phrase "to proclaim" as you did the gesture at the same time.

The more loudly you shout and the more energetically you do the gesture, the

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stronger the connection you make in your brain. By simply shouting the phrase and doing the movement vigorously several times, you will create a stronger and deeper memory of the meaning.

In a recent seminar I did in Vietnam, I taught a number of new words using this action vocabulary method. The students shouted the new words with me, while simultaneously using the strong actions I showed them. Each action was connected to the meaning of the new word or phrase. By the end of the lesson, they knew those words completely, never to forget them.

But that's not all. Since Effortless English™ is a deep learning system, I repeated those new words again — this time in a story lesson. Each time I used one of the new words in the story, I asked the students to use the same strong gesture we had practiced. Through the Mini-Story lesson, the students got even more repetition of the vocabulary, with emotion and strong actions.

Finally, I gave the students homework: download the audio of the same Mini-Story lesson, and listen to that audio every day for one week. If students do this, they will learn these new vocabulary words very deeply, and will remember them forever. That is the power of the Effortless English™ system, and that is the power of using physical movement while learning!

EIGHT SIMPLE STEPS TO CHANGING YOUR EMOTIONS

1. Find some exciting, energetic music that you LOVE.
2. Before you start listening to your English lesson, play the music.
3. As this exciting music plays, raise your head. Look up. Change your body.
   Pull your shoulders back. Stand tall. Then smile… smile a big smile.
   Take deep breaths.
4. Next, move your body. Dance with the music. Keep looking up. Keep smiling. Jump and dance. Lift you arms over your head as you jump and dance and smile. Feel the happiness and energy from the music.
5. Stop and say loudly, "Yes!" Say it again, "Yes!" One more time, "Yes!"
6. Now play your English lesson. As you listen, keep your shoulders back. Keep your eyes up. Keep smiling In fact, stand up and keep moving. Walk and breathe deeply as you listen to the lesson.
7. When you listen to my Mini-Story lessons, answer each question loudly. Don't be shy. Shout your answer Keep your head and eyes up. Keep a big smile on your face as you answer with a loud voice.
8. If you begin to feel tired or bored at any time, pause the lesson. Play your favorite music again and repea

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all of these steps. Add more energy to your body and your emotions. Then play the lesson again.

By managing your emotions in this way, you will study longer, you will remember more, and you will learn 2-times faster. You'll also teach yourself to be strong and confident when you speak English.

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CHAPTER 6

Use Big Real World Goals To Motivate Yourself For Success

Why, exactly, are you learning English? Why do you want to speak English powerfully? Surprisingly, many people have only a vague idea. They know that English is the “international language” and they feel they should learn it. In school, they are told that English is important. Some people are focused on tests scores. They are studying English in order to get a high score on the TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS or other exam.

Where do these goals come from? Typically, they come from the school system. In other words, they are external goals that are promoted by other people. Students are told these goals are important and thus spend years focusing on test scores. The problem is that external goals (goals provided by outside people) feel like work. These goals feel like an obligation.

These goals are weak and uninspiring, and that’s a problem because goals are our brain’s targeting system. Goals tell our brains what we want, when we want it, and why we want it. A powerful goal energizes, inspires and motivates us to do more and be more. A great goal can totally change your life. Weak goals, on the other hand, produce weak results.

Another step in developing your Effortless English™ fuel is, therefore, to develop stronger goals. But what makes a strong goal? A strong goal is one that creates a positive obsession in your mind. A strong goal is emotional. A strong goal not only motivates you, it seems to pull you towards action and success.

A great goal is like a positive addiction. The goal keeps you focused on what is important in your life. You can’t forget about it. In fact, with a truly powerful goal, you will find it difficult to stop thinking about it. This goal guides you and motivates you even through difficult times.

To be powerful, a goal must be intensely emotional in a positive way. This is why test score goals are so weak. Who gets excited and inspired by tests? In fact, for most people, tests are negative experiences that produce feelings of nervousness, fear and stress. That’s not very energizing or inspiring. No wonder so many people feel bad about English.

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So how do you find and create truly powerful goals? Begin by asking yourself power questions. These are questions that help you find your deeper reason for speaking English. As you go deeper, you will find more inspiring goals. And the best power question of all is simply, “why?”

Repeatedly asking why is an easy way to find your deeper purpose for English. For example, you might first ask yourself, “Why am I learning English?” Maybe your first answer is, “To get a high TOEFL score.” That’s a weak external goal. So you ask yourself again, “Why do I want a high TOEFL score?” Maybe you answer, “To get a better job.” Again you ask, “Why do I want a better job?” Now you are going deeper, finding your true purpose. Maybe you answer, “To make more money for my family.” And then you ask, “Why do I want to make more money for my family?” And you might answer, “Because I love them and want to provide an abundant and wonderful life for them.” You have found your big internal goal.

Your big goal is not to get a high TOEFL score, your true goal is to create a wonderful life for your family. English is a tool to help you with that goal. Isn’t that more powerful and emotional? Doesn’t that excite and inspire you more? Doesn’t that create much more fuel for your engine?

Of course, everyone is different. Maybe your big goal is to travel the world and live a life of adventure – and you know that English is the international language. Maybe you dream of being a rich and successful international businessperson, and English will help you achieve that dream. Maybe you dream of studying abroad at an American university. Maybe you want to make international friends from many countries around the world. Maybe you have more than one big goal for English.

The point is that English is a tool for communication. Just knowing a lot of words and grammar is useless. You must use the language to unleash its power. So the key to finding your big goal is to figure out how you want to use English in the real world.

With English, you must focus on your real world reasons for speaking the language.

Goals must excite you. You should feel enthusiastic and energized just thinking about your goals.

Even though I’m writing on this topic, I too have sometimes been guilty of having weak goals. For example, I recently did a series of seminars and presentations in Thailand. My initial goals were:

- To teach people about the Effortless English™ system.
- To connect with more people.

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Now these were certainly positive goals – but they had no power. They didn't excite me. They didn't create passion. So I thought more deeply. I asked myself, "Why do I want to teach people about the Effortless English™ system? Why do I want to connect with more people? What do I want to contribute? What do I want to accomplish?"

Better goals instantly came to my mind, including:

- I want to inspire people and change their lives!
- I want to awaken people's passion and love of learning.
- I want to awaken their imaginations!
- I want to heal their English trauma!
- I want to totally change the way people learn English.
- I want to help people achieve their dreams using English as a tool!
- I want to build an international family of super enthusiastic learners!
- I want to give people incredibly positive & powerful emotional experiences!
- I want to give them happiness, laughter, passion, and powerful confidence.
- I want to free people from doubt, from insecurity, from boredom, from hesitancy.
- I want to help them achieve their dreams!

Now these were exciting goals! These goals immediately gave me energy and power. They made me want to jump out of bed and get to work! They made me want to do a fantastic job as a teacher. They inspired me to learn and grow better and better. They made me want to create an amazing demonstration – not just some boring lecture.

Such is the power of big and meaningful goals. Why do you want to learn English? What is the most exciting outcome you can imagine speaking English will bring you? What truly inspires you about learning English? Think bigger. Dream bigger!

Do yourself a favor: Choose big, audacious, powerful goals for learning English. Ignite your passion!

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CHAPTER 7

Program Your Brain For English Success

While teaching English at a university in Thailand, I had a student named Ploy. On the first day of class, Ploy sat in the back row. During that class, she did her best to hide from me. She hunched her shoulders and tried to disappear behind the student who sat in front of her. Ploy remained silent during the entire class.

After class I asked her to stay a minute. I could see that something was wrong and wanted to find out how I could help her. I told her, “I noticed you were hiding during class, is everything okay?” She said, “I’m not good in English.” Ploy then described her longtime frustrations with English, including bad grades, bad test scores, and embarrassment. Because of this history, she was convinced that she had a flaw and was “bad at English.”

After talking with Ploy, I thought about her problem and her beliefs. I realized that other students in the class probably had similar feelings. Before I taught them English, I knew I had to find a way to help them reprogram their beliefs. That week I researched more psychology techniques and discovered the method of “mental movie programming.”

The following week, I taught the technique to the class and continued to use it throughout the semester. In just a few weeks, I noticed a dramatic difference. Ploy grew more confident and outgoing. First, she sat in the front row instead of the back row. Then, she began to participate in class. Her classmates likewise grew more confident week by week. This experience showed me the power of psychology and why it is so important to program yourself for success.

This chapter is the final step to reprogramming your psychology for English success. You’ll learn exactly how to program the beliefs, goals and peak emotions you need to develop race-car fuel for your Effortless English™ engine.

The problem for learners is not a lack of intelligence, nor a lack of will power. You are not “bad at English.” What most people lack is control over their mind and emotions. In fact, you have all the talent, intelligence and power you need to master spoken English at the highest possible level. You simply need to learn how to control your power and use it to change your emotions, beliefs, and actions in an instant, exactly as you want.

Like many English learners, perhaps you too suffer from “English trauma.”

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Perhaps you hold limiting beliefs, and feel frustrated, nervous or stressful when trying to speak. You want to feel confident and powerful when speaking, and to do so, you must learn to control your internal movies.

Your internal movies are the programs you use to create feelings, beliefs and goals. You create these movies with your five senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Your memories and your dreams are recorded in your mind as a combination of these senses. These are the ingredients you use to write and direct your own internal movies. These movies then create your emotions, thoughts and actions.

When you want to change the results you get with learning English, you want to change two things: how you feel when speaking English and how well you actually speak. In other words, you want to feel confident while speaking and you want to speak skillfully. This chapter is about how to change your internal movies so they program you for both powerful feelings and skillful performance while speaking.

As you think about the movies you make in your mind, realize that there are two things you can choose: What is in your movies and how that movie is made. If you frequently think about memories of embarrassment with English, that will change the way you feel. How that memory is structured is also important. For example, perhaps you remember a time when you were corrected by a teacher in class, and that memory creates nervousness about English. That memory is a movie in your mind. Internally, you see the event happening, you hear the teacher correcting you, and you feel the embarrassment (sight, hearing and physical sensations are the most common and powerful ingredients used in internal movies).

For most people, if you make that negative movie larger in your mind, the bad feelings will get stronger. Likewise, if you make the teacher's voice louder, the bad feelings are likely to get worse. And you could focus on the sensations or feelings of embarrassment and move them faster in your body, again making them stronger. By changing how the movie is played in your mind, you change its power.

These movie qualities are called "sub-modalities." They are the specific qualities of each sense used in your internal movies. Each of the senses has several sub-modalities that can be controlled and changed.

Visually, for example, you can change the colors of a movie, or remove color completely to make it black and white. You can change the size of the images in your mind, making them larger or smaller. If you imagine the movie showing on a screen inside your mind, you can change the distance to the screen, bringing it closer or pushing it away. You can change the brightness of a movie. You control the movement of your internal movies and can make them fast, normal, or slow motion. You can change the "camera angle" of your movie, changing the view of

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any scene.

Internal movies have soundtracks, and these too can be controlled and changed. You control the loudness of the sounds in your movie. You control the rhythm. You can change the tone and pitch, making sounds higher or lower.

And you also control the feelings or physical sensations in your movies. You control the temperature (colder, hotter), the pressure (more, less), and the location of sensations. You also control the intensity of emotions and can make them vibrate faster or slower in your body.

Essentially, you are the movie director of your own mind. The question is, will you control these movies and consciously direct them, or will you let them control you? A good director controls the images, camera angles, sounds, etc. in a movie to create exactly the thoughts and feelings he or she wants the audience to experience. As director of your own mind, you can do the same.

You can, for example, change your memory recordings. Memories are simply internal movies you have created about an experience you had in the past. For most people, these movies were created without conscious choice. The good news is you can re-direct these movies in order to make them weaker or stronger, and change the effect they have on your life.

Let’s do it now. Think of a very happy memory. It can be anything, any memory that makes you smile. Close your eyes, smile, and think of that memory now. As you remember, notice the image or movie in your mind. What do you see? Then notice what you hear: does your movie have sound? And what about the feelings: how do you feel in this movie? Where are the feelings in your body? Do you feel vibrations in your body, or feelings of tension or relaxation? Just notice the details of this happy internal movie.

Now become the director of this memory. If you only see a still photograph, make it into a movie by adding movement. Then make the image bigger in your mind, bring it closer to you. As you make it bigger, notice how your feelings change. For most people, making the movie bigger increases the power of the emotions (negative or positive). With a happy memory, you can make it even happier by making the movie bigger!

Of course, you can also change the sound and the feelings. Try making the sounds a bit louder, especially the pleasant sounds. When you notice the good feelings, locate where they are in your body and how they are moving. Feelings are physical and are usually experienced as a vibration or energy in the body. Make that happy vibration faster, and have it move through your body more. For most, this will also increase the feeling of happiness.

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Congratulations, you just directed your first internal movie. You learned how to increase feelings of happiness by becoming a better director. You can use this same skill with negative memories, thoughts and beliefs. Let's try it.

Remember a negative experience with English. Perhaps it's a bad experience from school, or a time when you felt nervous, frustrated, bored or foolish trying to speak English. As you remember this bad experience, again notice the details of your internal movie. See the memory in your mind. Notice if this movie has sound, and notice how you feel in the movie.

First, bring this negative movie screen closer to you, making it bigger. Make the sounds louder and vibrate the feelings faster. Most people will feel worse by doing this. That's not what you want. So now do the opposite. Push the movie screen farther away, making the movie smaller. Then make the movie darker and harder to see in your mind. Imagine this movie screen has a button that controls volume. Grab that button and turn it down, making the sounds quieter. In fact, turn off the sound completely. Finally, take a deep breath and calm your feelings.

By doing all of these things, you'll notice that the negative feelings are much weaker, or gone completely. You have taken an unhappy memory and made it powerless by consciously directing your mind. Most people believe that memories are unchangeable, but you have just proven that you are, in fact, in control of your memories. The same is true of your thoughts.

You have a choice. You can be the conscious director of your mind or you can let your brain run wild. Most people do the latter and they feel powerless. They are controlled by negative thoughts and memories and bad experiences. This is not necessary. You can choose to run your brain, directing it to produce the thoughts, feelings and actions you desire.

You can make the negative powerless and you can also increase the strength of positive memories, thoughts, beliefs and goals. You can control your brain instead of being controlled by it. This process not only works for memories, it also works for goals you want to achieve in the future. Think of a big goal for English, one of those large and inspiring goals that will change your life.

Close your eyes as you think of this goal. Now consciously make a movie for that goal. You are the director! See yourself speaking English powerfully to other people. Choose a situation that inspires you. As you look at this movie, notice the faces of the other people as they listen to you. See them smiling as they understand and enjoy your English! Grab that movie screen in your mind and bring it closer, so the movie is much bigger. Then make the colors more beautiful. Make the image a little brighter.

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As you continue watching this great movie, notice the soundtrack. Hear one of the listeners say, “Wow, your English is great! How did you learn to speak so well?” Turn up the sound so you can hear this loud and clear! Notice how you feel when you hear this compliment. You’ll feel the pride and happiness in your body somewhere. Where is it? Wherever it is, make that happy vibration faster and stronger and then move it around all of your body. Feels great!

You have just created your English power movie, and you are the movie star. You are confident and skillful. You are happy. You are amazing, speaking English effortlessly! Feels great!

With this directing power, you start to program your brain for the exact beliefs, emotions and outcomes that you want. You focus on this power movie every day, and each time you create the movie it becomes stronger. Anytime a negative movie arises in your mind, you use your directing skill to make it smaller and weaker. Day by day, by consciously mastering your mind, you completely change your life.

Of course this requires daily practice. Those old movies were created over many years, so you need to consciously create your power movies every day. By doing so, step by step you will re-program yourself for English success.

One particularly powerful way to reprogram your movies is by using a method called “the swish.” The swish is a classic technique of success psychology and NLP. A swish is a way to instantly and automatically change a negative internal movie into a power movie that makes you feel great. For example, if you frequently feel nervous when speaking English, you can program your mind to automatically change to feeling powerful and confident every time you speak.

You must practice and train this “swish” technique daily, but once it is programmed deeply, you will not need to think about it. Whenever you need to speak English, you will effortlessly feel strong and confident.

Here are the steps for using the swish technique:

1. Identify the feeling or action you want to change. Maybe it’s a feeling of nervousness when speaking English. First, make a movie of that negative situation. See, hear and feel what’s happening in this negative movie.

2. Next you will create a power movie that represents your goal, what you want to feel and do instead. You could, for example, use the power movie in the previous example… a movie of yourself speaking powerfully and feeling great.

3. Use the “swish” to connect the two movies and create an automatic change from the negative to the power movie. Essentially, you are anchoring the power movie to the old negative situation.

This is how you do the swish specifically:

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Close your eyes and start by making a big picture of the negative situation you want to change. See it clearly. Then imagine there is a small dark square in the corner of that picture. That small square is your power movie. So you have the big negative movie on the screen in front of you, and in the corner of that screen is a small square which contains the power movie.

Next, say “Wooosh!” and imagine that the small square explodes and becomes a huge movie screen. As it explodes, it completely destroys the negative movie and replaces it. Now you see your power movie in front of you. It is big, bright, and colorful. It has a great soundtrack and it feels great. Notice the movie and let those happy feelings grow stronger.

Be sure to say the word “Woosh!” loudly and powerfully, with a lot of excitement. Remember peak emotion and use a strong body gesture, too, in order to increase the positive feelings. You are creating a connection, an anchor, between the word, the gesture, and the power movie.

Next, open your eyes for a moment to reset. Then close your eyes and repeat the entire swish process. Each time, make the explosion happen faster. The power movie explodes and destroys that old image. Shout “Woosh!” loudly and make the peak emotions of your power movie even stronger.

Then open your eyes for a moment, reset, close your eyes, and do it again. Keep repeating the process, again and again. Each day, practice doing this ten times or more. Do it daily. It may take thirty or more days to program an automatic response. Once programmed, you will notice an amazing result. When you are in an English speaking situation, you may feel a brief moment of nervousness. Then suddenly, you’ll feel better — more powerful, more relaxed and more confident. It will happen automatically and effortlessly. This is the result of the swish programming.

Make this a daily habit. You can do this swish process every morning when you wake up and it will only take a few minutes. During these few minutes, you program your unconscious mind for success. You change the old negative movies. You develop more powerful beliefs and feelings about English. You take control and become a skilled director of your own mind.

You now have all the tools you need to develop powerful success psychology. You know how to create peak emotions and connect them to English. You know the importance of beliefs and how to change them through modeling. You know how to use physical movement to create emotions and enhance memory. You know the motivational power of big goals and how to find your deeper reasons for learning English. And you know how to consciously direct your mind to success by using internal movies.

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On the road to English fluency, you need two things: powerful fuel and a powerful car: strong psychology and a great method. You now know how to create the premium fuel you need.

In the next section, you will learn what to do with that fuel — the specific English learning methods you must use in order to speak English powerfully. It is time to learn the Effortless English™ engine.

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CHAPTER 8

Babies Learn Best — The Effortless English™ Engine

You have now learned the first part of the Effortless English™ system: the fuel or psychology. You know how to create high-quality emotional fuel to power your journey on the road to English fluency. Now it's time to focus on the engine that will use that fuel. This is what I like to call the Ferrari of language learning – the Effortless English™ method.

As I noted earlier, Effortless English™ is a system I developed over a period of several years of teaching and research. Through trial and error, I've been able to improve and adapt this method to suit the needs of learners all over the world. As long as you bring the proper psychology and emotional fuel to the method, I guarantee you'll arrive quickly at English fluency.

For purposes of clarity, I have broken the Effortless English™ method into seven steps. I refer to these steps as the "seven rules." In this chapter, I'll introduce these rules and briefly explain how they work. I'll also describe how this section will be organized, so that you can get the maximum benefits from studying English each time you sit down.

Each of the seven rules is a piece of "profound knowledge" that will completely change the results you get with English. Professor Edwards Deming described profound knowledge as a new idea, strategy or distinction that powerfully changes the quality of results. Profound knowledge is often a simple change that creates a big improvement.

Each of the seven rules is simple, but when used each will produce large improvements in your English speaking. Used together with strong psychology, the seven rules speed your travel along the road to fluency.

I should warn you that this method is completely different from the hidden curriculum you have used in the past. Remember, Effortless English™ doesn't depend on traditional methods. Instead, it is designed to follow the natural order of language learning seen with small children.

Babies Know Best

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In fact, babies and small children are the best English learners in the world! They easily learn to speak as a native speaker, with excellent grammar, vocabulary, fluency and pronunciation. Instead of studying textbooks, perhaps we should look at babies and how they learn English.

When a baby first starts to learn English, or any language, it mostly just listens. In fact, for many months, the baby or child will only listen without any real speaking. This period of listening is called the “silent period” by linguists. During the silent period, the baby is learning to understand the language. Of course, when a baby is silently learning the parents do not get worried. They don’t teach the baby grammar. They don’t get angry if the baby doesn’t speak.

What do the parents do? They simply talk to the baby using very simple English. They use actions while they talk. For example, they point to Mom and say, “mama, mama,” over and over again every day. Eventually the baby realizes that “mama” is the word for his or her mother.

Eventually, the baby will begin to speak. Perhaps one day they finally say “mama.” What happens? Do the parents correct the baby’s pronunciation? Do they try to teach the baby grammar? Of course not. Rather, everyone goes crazy with happiness because the baby said one correct word (usually with bad pronunciation). Everyone is smiling and laughing. Speaking English is a very happy time for the baby!

During the next few years, the baby will continue focusing on listening. Its speech will gradually become better. The baby will use more words. Its grammar will improve, even though it never studies grammar rules! The baby’s pronunciation will improve. And yet, for many years, its listening will still be better than its speaking. The baby will understand more than it can say.

This is the natural way of learning English. As you can see, it is very different than the way you learned in school. In school you focused on reading textbooks from the beginning. Perhaps you were forced to speak very soon, even though you were not ready. You focused on studying grammar rules. When you made a mistake, the teacher corrected you.

Unlike the baby, you did not improve quickly. You didn’t improve your grammar naturally and effortlessly. Your pronunciation never seemed to get much better. And your speaking always seemed too slow. For you, English probably was not a joyful experience. English was not a playful and natural experience that you loved.

Clearly there is something wrong with the traditional way of teaching English in school. Clearly we need a better method, a method that closely follows the natural way that humans are designed to learn a language.

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The truth is, your brain is an incredible language-learning machine. When you have strong psychology and an effective method, you learn English quickly. Even better, when you follow a natural approach, you enjoy the process of learning because you are no longer fighting against nature and your own brain.

You have learned Effortless English™ psychology. Now it is time to learn the engine, the method, of Effortless English™. Each of the seven rules is an important part of this method. Each rule is a new way to "play English." As you learn and use the seven rules, be sure to maintain a playful attitude. Be flexible. Have fun. Enjoy this new process of learning.

The seven rules are interconnected and work synergistically. "Synergistic" means the rules are more powerful when used together than they are individually. Each rule makes the other rules stronger. Together they form a powerful method for achieving fluency and skill with English.

How to use this section

The purpose of this section is to help you learn to speak English confidently and fluently. Now that I've explained the psychology of Effortless English™, my goal is to make the material in these pages as practical and useful as possible. In the next several chapters, I'll be explaining each of the seven rules of Effortless English™ in detail. I'll also be including more motivational tips, teaching examples and sample practice exercises to assist you on your road to fluency.

As you learn each rule, you'll get another piece of the Effortless English™ method. Together they form a complete learning system. At the end of this section I will teach you how to put these rules together to create your own daily individual learning plan. You'll learn exactly what to do, each day, to achieve spoken English mastery.

Enjoy the ride.

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CHAPTER 9

The First Rule – Learn Phrases Not Words

If you've taken English classes, chances are you've had plenty of experience memorizing lists of vocabulary words.

With Effortless English™ you are not going to do that anymore. Why? Because vocabulary lists are a waste of time. Yes, you heard me right. Trying to memorize a bunch of random individual words is not an effective way to learn. Instead, you're going to use the first rule of the Effortless English™ method and learn phrases not words.

What do I mean by "phrases?" Phrases are groups of words that are related, and focus on an idea. Another way to describe phrases is as "natural chunks of language." In any language, certain words naturally go together in a certain way. For example, in English we say "I am on an island." We don't say, "I am at an island." Why? There is no logical reason. One is simply a common and acceptable phrase and the other is not.

Here's another example. Let's say that *hate* is one of the new words you want to learn. In a traditional class, you'd write down the word *hate* and then go look it up in the dictionary to find its meaning. You'd see that it means to have a strong and intense dislike for something; to loathe or detest. Then you'd memorize it – *hate, hate, hate, hate, hate*.

That's the old way – kind of the textbook way, right? In school, you probably used this strategy to remember a lot of individual words. You had those big vocabulary lists, and you tried to memorize all of them for the test. For verbs, you also tried to memorize conjugation charts.

Even worse, you probably learned these words by memorizing translations in your own language. Because of this, you often find yourself translating in your head when trying to speak English. First you think of the word in your own language, then you try to remember the translation in English. This extra step slows both your speaking and your listening ability.

Trust me. It's much better if you learn a phrase – a group of words. It's easy. You listen to someone speaking real English, and when you hear a new word, you write it down. Or when you read a story and you see a new word, you write it down. Only you don't want to just write down that one word. You want to write down the whole

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phrase or sentence that it's in.

In other words, you learn the language in chunks. So, instead of just writing down the word *hate*, you would write down *John hates ice cream.* You would write down the whole phrase and its meaning.

It's easy to look up words in an English language dictionary, which most students own. Phrases can prese more of a challenge, since they can't always be translated literally. That's why I recommend all my students g a good idiomatic dictionary, or dictionary of English idioms. Idioms are common phrases or sayings in a languag If you just search online for "dictionary of English idioms" you'll find a ready selection of these books to choos from.

Why do we do this? What's the power of phrases? Well, for one thing, phrases give you a lot more information. They give you much more information than you would get from a single word. As a result, phrases are easier to remember, because they have deeper meaning. They present you with a kind of picture or story, especially when you get them from something you are listening to or reading. When you hear, *John hates ice cream*, you remember the whole little story. You remember who John is. You remember that he had ice cream, and then you remember he hated it. He didn't like it, right? So you have all these extra pieces of information. This extra information puts the word in context. It helps you remember the meaning of the phrase as well as the meaning of that word! This might not seem like much, but in fact this is a huge improvement for memory. By learning phrases, you will learn more vocabulary, you'll learn it faster and you'll remember it longer.

There's also another bonus. When you learn phrases, you are not just learning the individual word, you're learning grammar, too. You're learning how to use that word correctly with other words. You don't need to think about the grammar. You don't need to know the rules or worry about word order or verb tenses. It's automatic. You'll use the word correctly in a phrase because that's how you remembered it.

In the Effortless English™ system, this is one way that you learn grammar intuitively and unconsciously, without thinking about grammar rules. Phrases teach you natural spoken English grammar. By learning phrases, you are automatically

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learning both grammar and vocabulary at the same time. Two for one!

Learning the Natural Way

This is actually how native speakers first learn English grammar. It's how you learned your own language. When we're children, we learn in phrases. We learn in groups of words. *Give it to me. Walk across the street. He fell down. (*Note: in some cases the phrases I'll refer to could be full sentences, since they contain both a subject and a verb like the previous example: *He fell down*. In other cases, a phrase could be just a few words within a sentence. In this book I am using the word *phrase* to describe any natural word group).

The point is: we learn groups of words, not just one word. Word by word is slow and it doesn't help with grammar. But when you learn a whole phrase, you are getting extra information. Maybe you don't know it, but you are.

Let's return to our example: *John hates ice cream*. Remember, our initial word was *hate*. But now you see there's an "s" at the end – *hates,* right? *John hates*. You know from grammar study that you're making the subject and verb agree, but you don't need to think about that. You learn the grammar from just that word in the phrase, that "s" on the end, *hates.* And in the future, whenever you say John hates ice cream or he hates ice cream, you will automatically add the "s" because that's how you learned it. You won't have to spend time trying to remember the conjugations of the verb "hate" because you learned it correctly from a phrase and now it's automatic.

Of course, you don't actually have to think about all of this consciously. Just by learning the phrase, you will automatically learn the correct verb conjugation. You eliminate the extra step of labeling and analyzing grammar terms. That's why learning phrases leads to faster speech and faster understanding.

On the other hand, if you learn all of this from a textbook, you'll often just learn the root of the word "to hate" and you'll focus on this form: hate, hate, hate. So you study it and you memorize it. That's when you start making mistakes, because you memorized it mostly in this way, without other words. Later, you try to remember all of the conjugations of the verb. But because you didn't learn this with other words, sometimes you might say "he hate ice cream." You'll forget the "s" because you never learned it correctly in a sentence, in a phrase. And in a real conversation there is no time to think about verb conjugations.

Learning phrases will also help your pronunciation. One of the biggest problems I see with English learners is they speak with strange rhythm and intonation. Rhythm and intonation are the "music" of English. While many students worry about the

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pronunciation of individual sounds such as v, b, r, and l, their biggest problem is unnatural rhythm.

The rhythm of English is created by the natural pattern of pauses. Native speakers naturally pause between phrases. They speak the language in phrases, in short chunks of English. Because they learned English mostly from phrases, their pronunciation is clear and easy to understand. On the other hand, many students learn English by memorizing individual words, and when they speak, they speak word by word, one at a time. As a result, they often pause in strange places. They create unnatural word groupings. This creates a very strange and unnatural rhythm that many native speakers struggle to understand. This is very frustrating for the speaker and for the listener.

One of the easiest ways to improve speaking, therefore, is to learn phrases and to speak in phrases rather than word by word. This simple change will make your English speaking much clearer and much easier to understand. You'll sound more natural. The words will flow out more easily. You'll improve both pronunciation and fluency. You'll even learn grammar.

Where to Find Phrases

So where does a student get these phrases? How do you know which ones to learn? The good news is that you can find them everywhere. Any natural English content contains a wealth of phrases. In a future chapter, I will tell you specifically where to get useful English phrases. But for now, focus on getting phrases from whatever English you are listening to or reading.

To do this you need to start keeping a "phrase" notebook. Every time you see or hear a new word or phrase, write that phrase in your notebook. When you find new English vocabulary in a lesson, in something you are listening to, in a book, or in an article, write down the phrase. Not just one word, write down the entire phrase, and then review that phrase again and again each day. By doing this, you will create a notebook full of phrases and sentences you can use, not just individual words. You'll be programming yourself to speak in phrases instead of word by word.

If you're watching a movie about a bank robbery, for example, you might hear a character say, *"They're getting away!"* You know *get* means "to obtain" something, and you're pretty sure *away* refers to "being at a distance" – like far away. But it's confusing. So you write it down, *"They are getting away."* Then when you look it up in an idiomatic dictionary, you learn that one meaning of "to get away" is to escape. You might also discover that sometimes when people are going on vacation, they say they are *"getting away."* Even if you had previously memorized the words *get*

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and *away* on some vocabulary list, you still might not understand what the character in the movie is saying. But since you wrote down the phrase, you now know a new expression you can use in many different situations.

Here's another example. Let's say someone describes their former pet by saying, "*He was a bad dog.*" It's a fairly simple phrase, but you write it down in your notebook. Every time you review, you study that complete phrase. By doing that, you are getting free grammar – *he was*. You know this is something that was true in the past, not *he is*, which would mean the dog still was around. You're also getting some free tips about word usage. We don't usually say he was a *horrendous* dog, for example, even though the meaning is correct. In normal spoken English, we don't usually use that word to describe a dog. This is not what you would learn from studying the definition of horrendous. You learn it by studying a phrase.

When you write down a phrase, write where it came from. If you saw this in a newspaper article about the economy, put that down because that is going to trigger your memory. It will remind you of how the word was used and in what context. You'll start to learn when certain phrases and words are used and when they are not. This way, you'll begin to get a feeling about what is correct and how to put sentences together.

IMPROVING YOUR PRONUNCIATION

Pronunciation is a big worry for many English learners. Learning phrases will help, but there is anothe exercise you can do to improve even more. One of the greatest challenges with pronunciation is the problem c feeling strange when trying to use a native accent.

For example, many learners feel unnatural when trying to use an American accent. They feel they are nc being normal, or not being themselves. Their voice sounds strange to them. This is normal because speaking different language naturally forces you to create different sounds.

So how can you develop more natural English pronunciation? One strategy I suggest is to play a little gam with movies. In this game you try to become your favorite English speaking actor or actress. This is a variation c the movie technique, which I will describe in more detail in a later chapter. When you speak, pretend you are tha actor. Instead of worrying about your English, concentrate on speaking exactly the way the actor would.

In fact, it's important to think of this as a game and to even exaggerate the actor's pronunciation, movement and facial expressions.

Sometimes in my own classes I imitate the famous actor John Wayne, who played the hero in many ol Westerns and was seen as the typical American. I'll walk around my classes like I'm wearing cowboy boots an

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ready to go after some bad guys. Maybe you'll feel more comfortable playing Tom Cruise, Julia Roberts o another movie star . . . the idea is to exaggerate their pronunciation and push yourself to speak just like them. Hav fun, and you'll be surprised how much this will help your pronunciation.

The first rule of the Effortless English™ method is very simple. Yet this very small change to the way you learn vocabulary affects your grammar, your pronunciation and your memory of new words. Rule one is a piece of profound knowledge that works synergistically with the other rules.

In the next chapter you'll learn, perhaps, the most surprising rule of the Effortless English™ system. Rule Two frees you from the grammar translation method used in school and removes much of the boredom and pain of English learning.

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CHAPTER 10

The Second Rule: Grammar Study Kills Your English Speaking

The second rule of the method is the most shocking for most learners. After years of studying English in schools, most people believe that grammar study is the key to English speaking. In fact, many learners simply cannot imagine learning English without studying grammar rules. They have strong beliefs deeply programmed by the hidden curriculum.

That is why the second rule is such a huge change. The second rule of the Effortless English™ method is: Do NOT study grammar! Now I know this might be a tough idea for you to accept. Let's face it: for as long as you've been studying English, you have been told that you must learn grammar rules – in middle school, in high school, in university, in language schools, everywhere in the world it's grammar, grammar, grammar, grammar.

So my first question is: How did this strategy work for you? Was it successful? If you are reading this book, you've likely studied English for years and you focused a lot on grammar rules. But can you speak English easily, quickly and automatically right now? Did all of this grammar study produce the result you want?

If the answer is no, you are normal. Because despite what you learned in school, the truth is that grammar study actually hurts your English speaking. The problem with studying grammar is that instead of speaking English you focus on *analyzing* it. You become like the soccer player who is studying physics in order to improve. You learn a lot of information but your skill never seems to get much better.

In other words, you *think* about English instead of doing it. You think about the past tense, the present tense, the future, the present perfect, the past perfect. Now for writing English, that's not as bad. When you write English, you have time. You can think about things slowly and take your time. You can erase your mistakes. It's less of a problem. You don't need to write fast.

But when it comes to speaking, there's no time. You don't have time to think about the rules for the present perfect tense in English when you are talking to people. If someone asks you a question, you have to answer it immediately. You don't have time to think about prepositions. You don't have time to think about verb

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tenses, possessives, phrasal verbs – all the other linguistic terms you've learned. There's no time.

A student of mine in Barcelona named Oscar once struggled with this very issue. He wanted to improve his conversational skills, however, all he could think of was grammar. *Should I be using present perfect or another tense?* That kind of thing. He said he felt like he was chained up and the words just wouldn't come. So he stopped studying grammar. Over the next few months, his speaking dramatically improved. "It just started flowing out instead of me consciously thinking about it."

Research supports this, which is why linguists like Stephen Krashen recommend a more natural approach. Learning a language, Krashen notes, "doesn't require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules and does not require tedious drill."

In a meta-analysis of grammar instruction, researchers found that studies over the last century have failed to find a significant effect for the teaching of grammar directly. The research is clear: Learning grammar rules does not improve your spoken grammar. You have seen this with your own speaking. How many times have you made a grammar mistake when speaking, even though you "knew" the correct rule?

For example, many students who do well on grammar tests have terrible spoken grammar. They can tell you that the past tense version of "teach" is "taught." Yet, when speaking, they will say "last year he teach me." They know the rule intellectually, but this does not help their speaking.

Another common problem is slow and hesitant speech. While speaking, a student will constantly be thinking of verb conjugations. All this analyzing slows their speech, making it painful and unnatural for the listener. Even when they manage to speak correctly, they kill natural communication by being so slow and hesitant.

What Real English Sounds Like

Real English conversation is tricky. Real conversation isn't like what you learned in school. In fact, it often feels totally different.

One key difference is the fact that real speech very rarely uses full or "grammatically correct" sentences. Of course, in school, those are the only kinds of sentences you learned. You learned about Subject-Verb-Object. You learned to avoid sentence fragments.

Then you hear a real English conversation with real native speakers and you discover that they MOSTLY use sentence fragments!

This is something I immediately noticed when I read the transcripts for some of our Effortless English™ lessons. I knew that most of us tend to use a lot of

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fragments in normal speech, but even I was surprised at just how often we do this.

In fact, we constantly speak in partial sentences. We constantly use “run on” sentences. We constantly interrupt our own sentences and change our thoughts in the middle of speaking. A transcript of a real conversation – that is, a totally spontaneous and natural conversation – is completely different than anything you will find in a textbook.

And that is only one difference – there are many other major differences between real English conversations and textbook conversations or so-called “dialogues.”

This helps to explain why even “advanced” English students have such trouble when they come to the United States. While these students may have good individual vocabulary (usually formal), they have absolutely no exposure to real spoken English. In school they learned how people “should” speak English – but what they really needed to learn is how people actually DO speak English.

THE TRUTH ABOUT GRAMMAR

Sometimes people will ask me, “A.J., why are you against grammar?” I think it’s important to clarify that I most definitely am NOT against grammar. I just think people need to learn it intuitively. As a teacher, I need to teach it indirectly.

What does “intuitive grammar” mean, exactly? Intuitive mastery of spoken grammar is based on a “feeling for correctness.” This is the method that native speakers use to learn and master English grammar. By avoiding grammar study, learning phrases, and using other natural methods, the native speaker learns to identify what “sounds right.”

You do the same with your own language. As you speak, you do not think about verb tenses or other grammar. If you hear another person make a mistake, you know it’s a mistake because it “sounds wrong.”

Intuitive grammar mastery is the only kind of grammar learning that works for fast English conversations. Your intuition is fast, your conscious analytical mind is not. You must learn to trust the natural process and let your grammar improve automatically.

My students usually fall into two categories: those who are excited about rule two and those who are skeptical. I usually tell this second group to take a leap of

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faith. Be a scientist. You've spent many years trying to learn English the traditional way and look at the result.

So try a little experiment. For the next six months, dedicate yourself completely to the Effortless English™ method. Use the psychology system. Use all of the seven rules. Give all of your effort for just six months.

Then check the result. Did your English speaking improve? Compare the results you got from six months of Effortless English™ to the results you got with the old school methods. If the Effortless English™ results are better, and for most people they are, then continue using Effortless English™. If you still feel that grammar translation is better for you, you can always return to the method.

The Hidden Curriculum Can Be Hard to Break

When I was teaching English in San Francisco, I had two Korean students named Jinny and Jacky (their American nicknames). Each of these students was struggling with her speaking and each wanted to attend an American university. In order to be accepted into a university, the students had to pass the new TOEFL test, which included listening and speaking sections.

Jinny and Jacky had spent years studying English grammar in Korea. As a result, their speech was slow, unnatural, and hesitant. They felt nervous when speaking, constantly worried about making a mistake.

As students in my class, I taught each of them Rule Two. I told them to stop studying grammar. I told them to get rid of their grammar books and their TOEFL books. I told them to do their best to stop even thinking about grammar.

At first, both students were skeptical because this advice went against everything they had ever learned in school. Jinny eventually decided to accept my advice, while Jacky did not. Over the next several months, Jinny completely avoided grammar study. Jacky, unfortunately, continued. I would often see Jacky studying grammar and TOEFL books in a cafe after class.

Gradually, Jinny began to feel more relaxed about English. Her speaking became more natural and fluent. She was thrilled with the improvement! Jacky did not improve. She came to me and again asked for advice. She had once again failed to achieve the required TOEFL score.

Again I gave Jacky the same advice, stop studying grammar. Yet, despite her continued failure, she just couldn't believe me. The beliefs of the hidden curriculum were so strong in her that she simply couldn't accept another way. So she continued to focus on grammar books and TOEFL books.

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When I left that job, Jinny had moved on to an American university. Jacky, however, was still stuck in the language school. She was still studying grammar and still failing to achieve success.

Jinny and Jacky's story is powerful because it shows us how strong the hidden curriculum can be. Despite years of frustration and failure, some people just can't seem to break free from grammar study. They will continue using the same failed method for years, never learning to speak English powerfully.

To me, that is the worst tragedy of the hidden curriculum. These limiting beliefs imprison many people into a downward spiral of failure. It saddens me to see this cycle of frustration and stress.

For some, it may be difficult to accept Rule Two, but this rule is essential for your speaking success. As Jinny and countless Effortless English™ members have proven, spoken grammar can be mastered without studying grammar rules.

What I want you to remember is very simple: Do not study grammar rules. If you focus on grammar rules, it will hurt your speaking. You will speak more slowly. You will understand more slowly. To put it strongly, grammar kills your English speaking.

So if you have grammar books, throw them away. Say goodbye to grammar books forever. If you want, you can even burn them, set them on fire. Have a little celebration. Because grammar translation is worse than useless, it is actually harmful to your speaking ability.

For Practice

Exercise: Take a grammar holiday. For the next six months, just decide you are not going to study grammar. In fact, do your best to completely forget about grammar rules. Unlearn this information by avoiding grammar books. Whenever you catch yourself thinking about grammar, immediately change your focus. During this time, instead of worrying about mistakes, accept them. Accept that mistakes are normal and necessary.

Focus on communicating. The truth is that native speakers will still understand you even if you make grammar mistakes. While schools hate mistakes, normal people really don't care. They simply want to hear your ideas, your feelings, your thoughts. In fact, native speakers make grammar mistakes, too, and they don't get upset about them.

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CHAPTER 11

The Third Rule: Learn With Your Ears, Not With Your Eyes

My third rule for learning to speak English is simple, yet powerful. In fact, I usually say this is the most important rule because this is how we all learn language as children. It's such an easy thing to do that you have to wonder why most English classes don't emphasize it more.

Here it is: *Learn with your ears, not with your eyes.* That's right. If you want to speak excellent English, you have to listen. Listening, listening and more listening is the key to speaking excellent English. If you listen a lot, you are going to learn vocabulary. You will learn grammar. You will get faster at speaking and you will understand what people are saying to you. You will do all of this in a more natural and enjoyable manner. You will imitate the process that babies and small children use to learn a language.

Academic research on language learning has consistently found listening to be the biggest factor in overall language ability – particularly in the early stages. In fact, this is true even if you don't understand most of what you're hearing. That's because our ability to learn new words is directly related to how often we have heard combinations of the sounds that make up those words, says Dr. Paul Sulzberger, a researcher at Victoria University in New Zealand who conducted a 2009 study on the subject. "'Neural tissue required to learn and understand a new language will develop automatically from simple exposure to the language," Dr. Sulzberger said. "This is how babies learn their first language."

Remember the process used by babies and children? Babies learn through listening. They don't study grammar rules. They don't use textbooks. They don't take tests. Yet small children master spoken English, including grammar. In fact, experts say, 80 percent of your time studying English should be spent listening, even after you're no longer a beginner. Unfortunately, most traditional language classes don't emphasize listening. So if you studied English in school, you probably learned mostly with your eyes. I have observed many English classes in many different countries, and they're all the same. Most English teachers – whether in middle school, high school, university or private school – focus on textbooks in the

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classroom. There may be short “communication exercises,” but the entire class is defined and driven by a textbook.

Now, if your goal is to get a degree in English from a university, this is a great way to study. But if you want to speak real English, these kinds of traditional methods won’t get you there. Why? Because even if you study for many years, you’ve basically learned English analytically. You learned to think about English, talk about English and translate English. You also may know a lot about grammar rules. In fact, you know more about grammar rules than most Americans, most Canadians, most British people because native speakers don’t study that stuff very much.

English conversation is different.

Native speakers learned to speak English with their ears by listening, listening, listening, and that’s what you must do if you want to speak English quickly, automatically and naturally just like a native speaker.

The most important factor for learning English is what Dr. Stephen Krashen calls “comprehensible input.” In other words, understandable input. Input refers to what is coming into your brain. You get English input in two ways: through listening and through reading. Certain kinds of reading are very useful and beneficial. However, the most powerful kind of input for learning to speak is listening.

Comprehensible (understandable) input methods have been shown to be more effective than traditional methods (grammar study, drills, exercises, speaking practice). The research shows that speech happens as a result of listening.

Think of babies and children again. Listening is always the first step. No child starts talking before they understand through listening. They always listen for a long time, until they understand a lot of the language. Then, and only then, do they begin to speak. This listening “silent period” is vitally important to the process of natural language learning.

Another property of natural language learning is that speech emerges naturally from listening. Speech is not a skill that is consciously practiced or taught. Rather, after enough understandable listening, a child will just suddenly begin to speak. Its seems to happen by magic. The speaking ability grows out of the listening ability.

Researcher James Crawford has found that speaking English is the result of listening and that English fluency frequently occurs from listening alone. He states that English learning is an unconscious process, and while it’s happening we are often not aware that it is happening.

You can think of this like a seed in the ground. The seed, the potential for speaking, is always there. However, the seed needs water in order to grow and

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emerge from the ground. Likewise, our brains need a lot of understandable listening for effortless speech to emerge.

As you might imagine, because children spend so much time listening before they speak, their listening ability is always higher than their speaking ability. In other words, children always understand more English than they can actually use in speech. As you use the Effortless English™ system you will experience the same thing. Your listening ability will naturally grow faster than your speaking ability. Some learners worry about this but it is the natural and correct process.

Another way to think of this is that listening leads speaking and pulls it along. Listening is like a balloon with a string tied to speaking. As the listening level rises, it pulls the speaking ability up with it. They go up together, but the listening ability will always be higher.

"BUT I CAN UNDERSTAND WRITTEN ENGLISH PERFECTLY."

I hear this a lot from students who don't understand why they have great comprehension of written English, but can't speak it well. One reason is because English conversation is quite different from English reading. Conversation uses a different type of English, including different vocabulary.

English conversational vocabulary is much more casual. In English, this means we use more words of Saxon or Old English origin during conversation. We also use more phrasal verbs (two- or three-word phrases with either a verb and an adverb or a verb and a proposition, such as *get away, calm down* or *cheer someone up).*

The difference between conversation and more formal English is one reason that even "advanced" students have difficulty with everyday conversations. The problem is that students learn more formal English in school. Formal English tends to use more words of French and Latin origin. This kind of English is, in fact, much easier for students who speak Romance languages such as Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, or French. These students often do quite well when reading English, but have a lot of trouble understanding normal speech.

So, if you want to communicate with native speakers, it's very important to learn from English conversation and audios – not just textbooks and reading.

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Learn English Conversation

This is why listening is so important. Listening provides the foundation for speaking. As your listening ability improves, it will pull your speaking ability up, too. Too many learners are focused solely on speaking and they neglect listening. However, what use is speaking if you can't understand the other person?

Another reason listening is important is because the dynamics of spoken English are completely different from those of the written language. For starters, the grammar is different since we rarely speak in complete sentences. The vocabulary is also different with a lot more idioms and slang being used in speech. (See box.)

And most importantly, the speed is different. Speech is fast. Super fast. So fast that you have no time to think about translations, or grammar rules, or textbook lessons or pronunciation. There is no time. Your conscious brain simply cannot analyze, translate, and organize real speech. This is the reason your speech is so slow. This is the reason you can't understand two native speakers talking to each other.

In fact, in order to perform at real speaking speeds, you must turn off your conscious brain and let your subconscious do its job. To do that, you must use methods which awaken your subconscious. You must learn holistically, intuitively, and naturally.

Primarily, this means listening to lots of understandable English speech… and doing it repeatedly. As you listen, you quiet your conscious mind and just allow your brain to understand the whole meaning of the words. You don't try to pick out individual words. You don't worry about the few words you don't understand. You relax and you let the meaning wash over you. Your mind is open and quiet. And then, when you speak, you just let the words come out. You don't struggle. You don't analyze. You don't think about rules. You don't worry about mistakes. You don't think about translations. You just let the words pour out of your mouth effortlessly. This is what my students have learned to do. It takes time, but as you focus on listening and learning English effortlessly, your fluency, confidence and correctness will grow.

Less Stress

There's another benefit to spending a lot of time listening to English – it reduces the anxiety people often feel when speaking a new language. Many English classes push new students to speak right away, but this is an unnatural approach.

In fact, being required to speak too soon can slow down language learning. Your

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brain hasn't had enough time to process the new words and store them in your memory. So while you may be able to repeat familiar phrases in English, you still won't understand what people are saying to you. This is an unnatural and stressful situation.

In one study of beginning-level English students, researchers found that those who weren't forced to speak but were trained in listening comprehension did better than students taught using conventional methods. In addition, delaying speech also had a positive effect on students' overall attitudes about English, and kept the classroom free of anxiety.

Dr. J. Marvin Brown took this idea even further. The director of a Thai language program for foreigners, Dr. Brown created a program that mimics the silent period of babies and small children. In his AUA Thai program, students listen to understandable Thai every day but they do not speak for six months or more. The students focus completely on learning with their ears.

For many foreigners, Thai is a difficult language to pronounce. Dr. Brown found that the silent period had a strong positive affect on learners' pronunciation, eventually producing superior pronunciation much closer to that of a Thai native speaker.

The same principle works with English. Though a silent period is not necessary for most intermediate learners, you still might try it. Why not focus completely on English listening for a few months, and then return to English speaking? You'll likely find that your speaking has improved even though you never practiced it.

What Should You Listen To?

The most important thing to keep in mind is that you must listen to easy English. It has to be easy for you. That means you should understand 95% or more of what is being said. That's without stopping the audio and without a dictionary. So it should be quite easy. I say this because the natural desire of most students is to pick something harder, thinking it will help them. It sounds more impressive to say I'm listening to CNN rather than a children's program. If you choose something too difficult, you can get frustrated. With something easy, you get confidence.

Remember Dr. Krashen's idea of understandable input. If you don't understand, you are not learning. No understanding means no improvement. Easier listening is almost always better than difficult. Eventually, you will be ready for more difficult material, but take your time and listen to plenty of easy English.

If you're just starting out, try listening to children's programs since the English tends to be simpler. You can buy audio books online as a download, and get the

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audio book immediately so you can get started.

If you find yourself listening to something more difficult, you can still use it, but you usually need the text. You can get an audio article or a speech, and use the text so you can read and listen at the same time. For more advanced learners, another great source of casual English conversation is film. Listen to American and English movies and read the subtitles. This will also help you. Just remember, listening is the most important thing. To get the most from films, use the movie technique below.

If you don't have an audio player or smart phone, get one. It will enable you to listen to English conveniently whenever you can. Listen in the morning when you get up. Listen when you go to work, or when you are at home. Listen when you are at lunch. Listen when you are coming home from work. Listen in the evening – lots and lots and lots of English listening, lots of easy listening. I even have a free Effortless English™ podcast on iTunes and you can listen to that. Listen, Listen, Listen.

Rule Three is the reason that all of my courses are based on audio. Effortless English™ is a listening system where most learning is done through the ears. It's okay to use text to help understanding, but focus most of your time and efforts on learning with audios.

No matter how you choose to do it, it's important to listen to English as much as you can. Some of my students have been reluctant at first. But most of them say that getting to choose what they listen to starts to make it enjoyable. Instead of suffering through yet another boring textbook drill, you can relax and listen to something that is interesting to you.

MORE LISTENING PRACTICE

Looking for another great way to practice listening to English? Perhaps you might want to follow my weekly Effortless English™ Show. I do a talk show about mastering spoken English. This show is a great way to get easy English listening. As most Effortless English™ members know, easy and relaxed English listening is an important key to speaking English fluently.

To speak English fluently, you must listen to a lot of English – preferably easy and understandable English. My show is one way to get plenty of English

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audio. These are a great supplement to other English lessons or materials.

It's very easy to get my show! Just "Follow" me on Twitter. Go to Twitter.com/ajhoge. If you don't have an account, create one. Then go to my page and click "Follow." That's all! It's super easy.

Each week, check my Twitter page for "tweets" about the next Effortless English™ Show. Click on the link in each tweet to watch the video and download the audio.

If you prefer, you can search for the "Effortless English™ Podcast" on iTunes, where I put all of the audio recordings of the show.

The video recordings of past shows are also available on my YouTube channel, which is another source of learning suggestions and English audio.

Subscribe to my YouTube channel at: Youtube.com/ajhoge

Listening Practice

To help students improve their listening, I often suggest an exercise known as the "Movie Technique." To do this, you need to pick an English-language movie that you enjoy. Again, pick a fairly easy one, where you will understand most of the words used.

Begin by watching the first scene. This should take about 3 to 5 minutes. Turn on the English subtitles. As you go through it, pause if there is a something you don't understand. Look up the meaning of the word or phrase in an idiomatic dictionary. Watch the scene until you know all the words of it and understand.

The next day, watch the same scene again, several times. Once you understand the vocabulary, turn off the subtitles. Then watch the scene again, listening without the subtitles. Do this every day for the next five days or so. You might spend four or five days on one scene, but that's okay. Each repetition improves your English listening ability.

Now watch the scene again, but try pausing after each sentence or phrase. Repeat the sentence out loud. In fact, don't just repeat the sentence, act out the scene. Copy the speech of the actors. Copy their movements, facial expressions, and emotions. Pretend you are the characters in the scene. Remember the movie pronunciation exercise? This is another version of it.

This entire movie technique might take you a whole week for just one scene. When you feel you have mastered the scene, you can start the entire process again with the next scene. It might take several months to get through one movie, to really learn it, but that's the point. The movie technique is a way to thoroughly learn and

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master all of the English used in a film. This method will improve your listening, your fluency, and your pronunciation. If you just watch a movie once, without using this process, you get little to no benefit from it.

WILL LISTENING TO MUSIC IMPROVE MY ENGLISH?

I get this question a lot. Personally, I don't suggest learning English through music. I get students coming to me with lyrics, and I can't understand half the words the singer is saying. Music is an art form with lots of imagery in the language. Even native speakers often don't know what the singer is trying to say. Likewise, the pronunciation used in songs is not normal. Singers frequently change the natural pronunciation in order to fit the words into the melody of the music. In terms of learning English, it's much more efficient to use television or movies. The meaning of what people are saying is usually clearer, and you also have video to provide visual cues that help you understand. So yes, please listen to English language music if you like how it sounds, but don't expect it to help your own communication in English.

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CHAPTER 12

The Fourth Rule – Repetition Is The Key To Spoken Mastery

You want to learn English and you want to speak it well RIGHT NOW. The problem is most language classes move too quickly for students to master material before moving onto something new. In this chapter, we'll focus on the fourth rule of Effortless English™ which advises you to take your time and *learn deeply*.

What does it mean to learn deeply? To learn deeply means to learn English to the point where speaking and understanding are automatic. Often people know a lot of English grammar and vocabulary, but they don't know it deeply. When it comes time to speak, they're translating vocabulary and analyzing tenses in their heads or struggling to understand the meaning of what someone is saying to them. Effortless English™ emphasizes training for mastery.

Deep learning means repeating what you have learned, again and again. This might feel very different from the way you learned in school. Most schools have a lot of pressure to move fast. They're always pushing the students to learn more grammar or a certain number of new words every week. The teachers rely primarily on textbooks, and try to finish them on schedule. The problem for students is that you learn a lot of stuff but then you forget it. Or you remember the basic idea, but you can't use it.

Take the past tense, for example. If you've studied English before, chances are you learned the past tense. Chances are also good that you studied it in a textbook and then *BOOM* very fast, you moved on. You went on to learn more grammar, possessives, the future tense or the present perfect tense.

Now, if someone asks you if you know the past tense, you'd say, "of course." But the truth is you haven't mastered the past tense. You moved through the material so quickly that you never learned it deeply, like a native speaker. That's why you still make mistakes with the past tense. Even though you may have studied English for many years, you still make mistakes because it's not automatic. You haven't learned it deeply.

Master the Fundamentals

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To better understand deep learning, once again let's look at the world of sports. Imagine, for example, a professional golfer. How does a professional golfer master the game and continue to improve?

The most important skill for a golfer to master is their swing. A professional will practice their swing five hundred times a day or more, every day. A good golfer never says, "OK, I already know how to swing, so now I need to do something else."

Golfers understand that the best way to master the game is to master a few fundamental skills. They practice these same few skills hundreds of times a day, for years and years — possibly for their entire lives.

Unfortunately, many English learners fail to understand the importance of deep learning. In my English classes, I frequently spent a long time repeating and reviewing the most common and most useful language. Sometimes a student would complain. They would say, for example, "I want to learn advanced grammar. I already know the past tense."

Yet, in a casual conversation, this same student frequently made mistakes with the past tense. He said "go" when he should have said "went." He didn't understand the difference between knowledge and skill.

Remember, knowledge is something you analyze and think about. Skill is something you do. Knowing the past tense is useless. You must be able to use the past tense instantly and automatically in real conversations. You need English skill, not English knowledge.

How To Learn Deeply

If this sounds familiar, don't despair. You can move much closer to your goal of speaking excellent English simply by adjusting the way you learn. You just need to slow down and repeat everything you learn again and again. For example, I tell members of my courses to repeat each lesson daily for at least seven days. This is the case even if they think they know it well after listening to it twice. If it's still difficult, I advise them to listen to the lesson daily for two, three or even four weeks. Remember, it's not a race. The point is not to memorize, or recite the phrases back like a bird, but to truly deeply understand the phrases you are learning.

Often I get a question like this from a student: "A.J., can I learn two lessons in a week?" That's a good question. People want to go faster. They want to do more. I understand that. But if you ask any of my advanced students, they will all give you the same answer: No.

Why? Because deep learning is important. You need to repeat each audio every day for seven days. More is fine. Yes, 14 days is better, 30 days is even better than

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that. Less than seven won't get the job done. You won't be doing enough repetitions to have the material sink in deeply. It's challenging to pace yourself, because I know many people think that faster is better. But it doesn't work that way. You need to repeat each audio at least once a day for seven days. You're doing this because you want your knowledge to go deeper and deeper. You are learning for mastery.

Julia, a student from Italy, at first had a hard time accepting this idea. She thought she would get bored and that it might be a waste of time. But she wanted to improve her English, so she was willing to try it. Over time, she says, she realized she had spent years learning English but not in a deep way. "When I studied the second lesson," she says, "I had already forgotten the first. "

These days, Julia sometimes listens to an audio for an entire month before she moves on. "It's not hard work anymore," she says. "I've developed a way to listen and learn deeply and it has really helped my English."

So if you have an audio article or podcast, something you listen to and like, don't just listen to it once. One time is not enough. Five times is not enough. You should listen to that article, speech, whatever it is 30 times. Or perhaps 50 times, 100 times or even more.

After you've learned the vocabulary, keep listening. Because knowing the vocabulary means that you can take the test and say the meaning, but when you hear it do you instantly understand it? Can you use it quickly, easily and automatically? If the answer is no, you need to study it again, you need to listen to that same audio again. Many, many times. This is one of the secrets to speaking faster and to really learning grammar and using it correctly.

You are like the professional golfer who practices his swing hundreds of times per day. The golfer is always looking for ways to improve that same fundamental skill. The golfer realizes that mastery of the fundamentals is more important than a lot of advanced knowledge.

For example, you might listen to a story in the past tense over and over for two weeks. After that, you'll listen to another story for two weeks, and maybe another story in the past tense for the same length of time. You never stop. I am a native speaker and all my life I have been learning the past tense. I still listen to the past tense now, and I will as long as I live. I've heard the same common vocabulary words every day thousands and thousands of times and will continue to hear them. That has enabled me to use them quickly and automatically.

That's the secret. You never stop. You just need more repetition. Focus on the most common words, most common verbs, most common phrases through listening and then repeat, repeat, repeat. When you do that, you develop that "feeling

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for correctness" and will use English more naturally and automatically.

Perhaps you are thinking to yourself, "But won't I get bored listening to the same thing again and again?" Of course this is possible. The best way to avoid boredom is to choose material that is compelling to you. Compelling means "extremely interesting."

How do you find compelling content? One way is to learn about something you love, in English. For example, if you love romance novels in your own language, get them in English! Find easy romance audiobooks and listen to them every day. Find the text versions of the books, too, and read while you listen. If you love business, then learn about business in English. Use English as a means of learning other knowledge and other skills. The more you focus on this compelling content, the easier it will be to repeat it often. You'll enjoy hearing it again and again.

Deep Learning Practice

Exercise 1: Pick an audio that's ten minutes long. This is going to be your main audio for the week. Listen to it a few times. Repeat this process every day for the next week. Really commit yourself to mastering it. The idea is you're not trying to memorize it, but rather to thoroughly know it. Imagine that each time you listen to and understand the audio, it is going deeper into your brain. It's like a seed you are planting in your mind. Plant it deep and water it with many repeated listenings.

After you have mastered the first audio, pick two additional audios. They should each be 5-20 minutes long. Listen to these in the same way as you did the first.

You will notice yourself going through different learning stages as you do this. Try to be conscious of these stages. The first will be, "Oh no, I don't understand." You may need to use a text for total understanding. You'll know you've hit the second stage when you can listen to the words and phrases without reviewing any of them. The third stage will be when you're hearing and easily understanding without the text. How long does it take you to get to the third stage? How does listening to longer audios affect your understanding?

How quickly will you progress and how many repetitions are required? Much of this will depend on your state of mind during repetition. Are you relaxed? Energized? When I teach action vocabulary in seminars, students can often master new words and phrases in just a few minutes because they are moving and excited. Repetition with half-concentration and low energy is not as good as repetition with engaged emotional energy. So as you are repeating the audios, stand up, move around, and even shout the phrases to yourself. If you're feeling self-conscious, close your door and do this in your room until you get more comfortable with it.

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Exercise 2: Select an audio for listening practice. A common complaint I hear from students about deep learning is that they get bored listening to the same thing day after day. So in this exercise, every few days you're going to change your focus. On the first day, concentrate on just learning the vocabulary. On the next day, play a game where you're just trying to understand the audio completely without the text. A day later, play a sentence, pause the tape and shout the sentence. Copy the speaker's rhythm, tone, and emotion. Work on your pronunciation. Next, try a game where you play two sentences and then repeat them loudly, with emotion. The next day, return to just listening and understanding. Basically, each day you shift your focus on the same material so that you learn from many different angles. The important thing is that each repetition you do has a purpose.

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CHAPTER 13

The Fifth Rule: Learn Grammar Intuitively And Unconsciously

I've promised that you can learn to speak English well, without studying grammar rules. I've even told you to throw your grammar books away because you don't need them. Now I'm going to show you what to do instead.

It's actually a very simple technique – one that I believe is the best way to learn grammar – not only to learn English grammar, but grammar for any language. The fifth rule of Effortless English™ is: Use Point-of-View Stories. These are small, short stories in which we change the point of view. In other words, we change the time frame and we change the grammar to create multiple versions of the same story.

By reading and listening to these story variations, you can learn grammar intuitively without thinking of tenses, conjugations, etc. Point-of-view stories are easy and fun. Best of all, they allow you to absorb the grammar naturally by understanding the context of stories. That is the key point. Rather than studying abstract grammar rules, you acquire spoken grammar skill from meaningful and memorable English.

Point-of-view stories were first developed by Blaine Ray, the creator of the TPRS learning system. In the 1990s, Ray was a high school Spanish teacher in California who was looking for ways to engage his students beyond the traditional drill and memorization methods used in language classes. TPRS stands for Total Physical Response Storytelling (also described as Teaching Proficiency) through Reading and Storytelling (see box). It was Ray's belief that students could learn to speak Spanish more naturally by listening to certain kinds of simple stories.

I immediately recognized the power of these stories, and decided to modify them for my own teaching system. Point-of-view stories are now a very important part of the Effortless English™ system.

How do point-of-view stories work? In the simplest version, you start by listening to a main story – usually told from the past point of view. In other words, the story is mostly about events that happened in the past.

Next, you listen to another version of the story, with a different point of view. So,

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for example, you might hear the same story told again in the present. Then you listen to yet another version, told as if it will happen in the future. Or even another version that talks about past events that have continued to the present.

Each point of view story is basically the same, but the change in time creates changes in the language used… especially the verbs. By listening repeatedly to these stories, you easily and naturally absorb the most common and most useful English grammar tenses. Because you learn them subconsciously and intuitively, you will actually USE them correctly when you speak – and you won't have to think about it!

An important focus of point-of-view stories is that they should focus on the most commonly used grammar structures. Some students become obsessed with extremely rare forms of grammar while neglecting the forms that native speakers constantly use on a daily basis. For example, "He slept for six hours" is far more commonly used than "He will have been sleeping for six hours." It's far more important to master the first form of the sentence (the simple past) as it is far more useful for communication. Thus, the point-of-view stories you use will be limited to only the most common forms.

The great thing is, you only need to listen to these stories a few times every day. You don't need to analyze the grammar changes… and you certainly don't need to identify the linguistic grammar rules. There is no need to identify which version is the "simple past," or which is the "past perfect." These terms may be useful to linguists, but they are distracting to those who wish to speak quickly, easily and automatically.

You must trust your intuition and simply listen to each version of the story without analyzing it. Try to quiet your analytic mind. Relax and focus on the events of the story. With time, you will absorb the grammar intuitively, and use it correctly without effort.

PUTTING THE PHYSICAL INTO STORYTELLING

Dr. James Asher, a psychologist at San José State University, was one of the earliest researchers to identify the importance of physical movement in learning. Asher developed the "total physical response" method (TPR) after discovering that students learned language more effectively if they associated words and

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phrases with meaningful movement. He taught language without translation, solely through the use of actions. For example, he would say to a class, “Sit down,” and then he would demonstrate the action of sitting. Then he would say, “Stand up,” and he would demonstrate standing. After repeating this series a few times, students quickly understood the meaning of the phrases “Sit down” and “Stand up.”

In the next phase of the lesson, Asher indicated to the class to join him. So when he said “Stand up,” the whole class stood up together with him. And when he said “Sit down,” the class demonstrated their understanding by sitting.

In the final phase, Asher gave the commands but did not demonstrate them. Rather, he watched to be sure the class understood. This eliminated the need for translation, as the students connected the phrases to the actions.

With time, students in Dr. Asher’s class were able to learn and demonstrate very complex commands such as, “Stand up, turn around five times, then walk backwards to the door and close it.” Dr. Asher built core fluency entirely through the use of commands and actions. Later, Dr. Asher and other researchers modified TPR, adding gestures to represent more abstract terms like “think” or “hope.”

TPR was a predecessor of Blaine Ray’s TPRS (Total Physical Response Storytelling). Ray realized that if the actions and gestures were combined to create a story, students would learn even more quickly. TPRS is a method for getting students to physically and verbally interact as part of storytelling. This technique was the starting point for much of the Effortless English™ system.

A Sample Point-Of-View Story

Let me give you a very simple example of a point-of-view story: *There is a boy. His name is Bill. Bill goes to the store. He buys a bottle of water. He pays two dollars for the water.*

Ok, that’s it. That’s our little story right now. It’s not very interesting, but you understand it easily. It’s in the present tense, and all you need to do is just understand it. If this was an audio story, you would listen to it every day for a week or more. Remember, we’re striving for deep learning, so you’re going to repeat it a lot of times.

Next, I tell you the same story again, but now it’s in the past: *There was a boy named Bill. Yesterday, he went to the store. He bought a bottle of water. He paid two dollars for the water.*

Ok, that’s all. Very simple. Of course, in my lessons my point-of-view stories are

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longer. They're more difficult and they are more interesting. But this is a simple example to help you understand the concept.

So now you've read or heard Bill's story in the present and the past. Ideally, you have audio versions and you listen to that story in the past many times. When you listen, don't think about the grammar rules. You don't need to analyze, "Oh, this is the past tense" or "Oh, 'paid' is an irregular verb." No, no, no – no need to think about that. Just listen to each story version and understand the meaning. That's all you need to do. Listen to the first story – understand the meaning. Listen to the second story – understand the meaning. That's all. It's easy, effortless grammar learning.

After that, you would listen to the future version of the story: *Imagine there will be a boy. His name will be Bill. He'll go to the store, and buy a bottle of water. He's going to pay two dollars for the water.* That's the end of our short example in the future.

Again, all you do is just listen to this little easy story. You listen to the present version. You listen to the past version. You listen to the future version. Every day for seven days or more, you listen to each one.

We can even add more versions. We can practice any kind of grammar with this. For example, I might say: *There was boy. Since last year, he has gone to the store every day. He has bought a bottle of water every day. He has paid two dollars for the water.* You don't need to know the name of the grammar or the verb tense that I'm using. It's called the present perfect, but you don't need to know that. I don't want you to think about that. All you need to do, again, is listen to this version of the story.

Of course, I'm using extra phrases to help you understand the meaning. I said, "Since last year," so now you understand that these verbs change because something happened in the past and it has continued for a while, but you don't need to think about that. That's why these stories are so easy and powerful. You just listen. You listen to story number one. You listen to story number two, and you listen to story number three and to story number four, and you learn the grammar like a native speaker. Like a child.

When you learn grammar like this, using these kinds of stories, you are training like an athlete and you are freeing yourself from the hidden curriculum. This is the difference between learning grammar as abstract knowledge and acquiring the skill of using grammar in real speech. You want the skill. You want to use correct grammar without thinking about it.

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HOW TO LISTEN TO POINT-OF-VIEW STORIES

To get the most out of a point-of-view story, do your best to focus on the story and imagine it in your mind a you're listening to it. Turn off that part of your brain that labels the tenses or thinks about grammar. Instead, thin of a line going through your body. Behind you is the past. In front of you is the future. Imagine now that the stor you're hearing is inside a box or radio. As you hear the past version, try to imagine that box sitting behind you back in the past. When you listen to a future version, picture the box in front of you, up in the future. Imaginin where you would put this box or radio on the line gives the story a visual component, which will help you t more intuitively understand the grammar.

While it's easy to understand this idea by reading sample point-of-view stories, it is essential that you use audio versions. Remember Rule Three: listening is the key to speaking. You not only want to learn grammar intuitively, you also want to learn *spoken* grammar. That means, just like vocabulary, you need to learn grammar with your ears.

Learning grammar with audio point-of-view stories develops your "feeling for correctness," the same skill used by native speakers. Each repetition and each variation develops this feeling. Eventually, you will instantly know correct grammar because it will sound right to you. No need to think about linguistic terms. That's when you know the point-of-view stories are working.

Remember that true grammar skill must happen instantly. In a real conversation, you must produce the correct grammar without hesitation. There is no time to think about rules. This instantaneous grammar skill can only be developed subconsciously and point-of-view stories are one of the best ways to do this. By using these stories, you skip the unnecessary step of thinking about abstract rules. You produce correct English grammar intuitively, without conscious thought. In this way, you use grammar like a native speaker. It takes time and repetition, but point-of-view stories give you the most effective training for spoken grammar mastery.

The Psychological Benefits

We have discussed the benefits of point-of-view stories to your English. These are significant. However, the psychological benefits of these stories are perhaps even more powerful.

For most learners, abstract grammar study is one of the most painful aspects of

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studying English. Most people find grammar study to be boring, confusing and frustrating. Many dread the idea of trying to memorize yet another grammar rule. Most English learners have bad memories of grammar lessons and grammar tests.

Grammar study has a way of making intelligent people feel stupid. They study and memorize countless conjugations. They analyze the use of English articles, prepositions, countable and uncountable nouns. Yet, when it's time to actually speak, they find themselves constantly making mistakes. Even though they "know" the grammar, they struggle to use it. "What's wrong with me?" they ask themselves. "I know this."

They are not stupid. They have simply confused knowledge with skill. Leave grammar knowledge to the professional linguists. Your job is to acquire grammar skill intuitively, and point-of-view stories are the best way to do that.

Practice Exercise

Here's a fun way to create your own point-of-view stories. Find a simple story about something that interests you. The story might contain a few words or phrases that you don't understand and have to look up in a dictionary. However, it should be easy. Five new words is the maximum that should appear in the story.

Now, show this story to your English teacher, or an English-speaking friend. Ask them to rewrite the story from different points of view. They will write different versions for at least the past, the present and the future. After they write each version, ask them to read each one and record it. Then, for the next week or two, listen to all versions of the story every day.

Once you have mastered those stories, repeat the process again with a completely new story. Simply by listening each day, you will develop your spoken grammar ability. Just like an athlete, you'll train yourself in the skill of using correct grammar automatically.

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CHAPTER 14

The Sixth Rule: Learn Real English And Trash Your Textbooks

You've been studying English for years. But when you hear someone speak it doesn't sound like the English you learned. You find it hard to understand, and when you speak, people look confused.

Sadly, this experience is fairly common. It's what happens when you've been taught English the traditional way where your teacher relies heavily on textbooks and classroom drills.

That's why we don't use textbooks in Effortless English™. In fact, you have my permission to throw your textbooks away. Go ahead. Pitch them in the trash. As I've said before, textbooks aren't the way to learn a language. With Effortless English™, you learn real English, and that is Rule Six.

Textbooks have a number of problems. First, they are grammar-focused. We have already discussed the reasons you should avoid grammar study. Another huge problem is that textbooks mostly teach the formal form of English. This is the form of English you commonly find in writing. Textbooks rely heavily on written dialogues that are completely unnatural.

Perhaps you recognize this one:

"Hello"

"Hello. How are you?"

"I'm fine, and you?"

The textbook may be accompanied by an audio, in which actors read this dialogue using strange rhythm and completely unnatural pronunciation.

So what happens in real life? You study this textbook dialogue, and you think you know English. Then you travel to an English speaking country such as the United States. You meet a person at the bus stop and they say, "Hey, what's up?" Of course, they are just greeting you and asking, "How are you?" but they are using the real casual English that is much more common among native speakers.

In fact, as a teacher in San Francisco, I heard this common complaint most often from students. They traveled from many countries to study in America. Many new students thought of themselves as advanced English learners. Many had great test

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scores.

However, when they tried to communicate with real people, they had tremendous problems. I remember one student named Humberto saying to me, “I can’t understand what anyone is saying. I don’t understand people at the bus stop. I don’t understand the waitresses in restaurants. I thought I was advanced, but I can’t understand anyone.” Like most students, Humberto had studied formal textbook English but had never learned real conversational English. He did well on tests but could not function in the real world.

Real pronunciation is also much different than what you’ll find in textbooks and their audios. This is another source of difficulty for those who learn using traditional methods. Schools typically teach the formal dictionary pronunciation of English words. While the textbook will teach you “How are you?” a real American speaker is likely to say something like, “Howya doin’?” “Howzit goin’?” “Hey, whassup?” or “Nice-ta meetcha.”

To really communicate in English, you absolutely must understand this real English. And these are only the simplest examples of greetings. The entire language is full of such examples. No wonder even “advanced” textbook English learners struggle to communicate with real people.

Idioms are another common problem for textbook learners. Spoken American English is full of idioms, yet you’ll learn few of them from textbooks. Recently, I recorded a conversation with my Dad on the topic of business. Later, as I reviewed the recording, I was shocked by just how many idioms we used in that short conversation.

Idioms are phrases that have a meaning different from the individual words in it. They are often based on metaphors or cultural topics and can be quite hard to understand logically. For example, in a business meeting, a colleague might say, “We scored a touchdown on that project.” This idiom comes from the sport of American football, and it means to have a big success or victory. You’re unlikely to learn this phrase in a textbook, yet it is very commonly used by Americans.

Clearly, textbooks are ineffective learning tools. What tools will you use then? You’ll learn the same way native speakers do: by using real authentic materials. *Use only real English materials:* the sixth rule. What do I mean by real? Well, I’m talking about English materials that are for native speakers or that are very similar to those used by native speakers. They can be books, articles, audio books, podcasts, videos, etc.

You can find plenty of real English listening material on the Internet. Podcasts are perfect. I have a Podcast. You can go to

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https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/effortless-english-podcast/id188333691 and listen to me talking about English, talking about learning, talking about my ideas. It's free. It's easy. You can just listen, listen, and listen – there are a lot of real materials. I'm just talking normally and I'm a real native speaker. I'm not acting and I'm not reading.

And there are a lot of other podcasts out there. You can pick English learning podcasts, or better yet, a podcast on any topic you like. If you like sports, find English podcasts that talk about sports. If you like cars, find ones that talk about cars. If you like exercise or health, find podcasts about that.

Audio books are another great way to practice your listening. An audio book is just a book that someone's reading and they record it. So instead of reading the book, you listen to the book. The key is to choose audiobooks that were created for native speakers. Also, choose audio books that are easy for you. You may need to start with children's storybooks. That's okay. I can guarantee that listening to a children's storybook is more interesting and more useful than some boring textbook.

One of my favorite examples of good authentic materials is a children's book with an audio version. These are useful because you can listen and read along at the same time. You can also easily look up unknown vocabulary in a dictionary. I often have to tell my adult students not to be too proud to get a book for kids. You'll probably find a book by Dr. Seuss is more interesting than a textbook, because it is a real story written for native English speakers.

As you get better, when your English level is higher, you can listen to audio books for young adults or for older children. Just keep listening to real English. When something gets too easy, choose something a little more difficult until that gets easy. Eventually, when you are advanced, you can listen to CNN or the BBC, or American movies, British movies, Australian movies, etc. But again, that's at an advanced level. Start with easy stuff.

By focusing on real English materials, you are immersing yourself in the language used by native speakers. You are not learning a strange special language taught only to students. By listening to real English, you guarantee that you are learning useful language that is used in the real world. At the same time, because the material you use is authentic, you also learn idioms and culture – which are vital to understanding spoken English.

I have created an audiobook version of this book so you can use this book for English practice. See the back of the book for more details.

Real English materials will even help you improve faster on exams such as the

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TOEFL. Research by Dr. Ashley Hastings found that students who learned with authentic materials (books, movies, TV shows) improved 35% more than students who studied in a TOEFL preparation course using sample tests.

What about reading? While listening will be your main focus, reading authentic materials is also powerful. With reading, you follow the same principles as you did with authentic listening materials. You read easy English story books or easy English novels. You choose books that are pleasurable. Pick something you enjoy, something that's interesting – maybe a romance or maybe an adventure story or any topic or category that fascinates you.

Dr. Krashen calls this "free voluntary reading" and it is the most powerful way to increase your English vocabulary. Reading authentic materials has been shown to increase vocabulary much faster than studying lists of words. As you'll see in a future chapter, this kind of reading is also the best possible activity you can do in order to improve your English writing ability. Research finds that reading and listening for pleasure leads to superior TOEFL performance. I always recommend my students start with children's novels, usually something for elementary or middle school age. For beginners, graded readers can be useful. I also like series of books such as *Goosebumps*, *The Hardy Boys* and *Nancy Drew.* These include a lot of books, more than 30 in some cases. They are easy reading and they will help your writing ability, reading speed, and vocabulary.

As you improve, you'll naturally seek out more difficult books and audios. One strategy is to find an author you like and read every one of his or her books. For example, if you enjoy scary stories you could read every book written by Stephen King. If you enjoy romance, why not read all of Danielle Steele's books? If you can find audiobook versions for these, even better. By the time you finish an entire series of books, you will have improved your real English skills dramatically.

In my Effortless English™ courses, I often focus on topics such as self-improvement and success. I want members to focus on the topics and real English in my lessons, not on the parts of the language. The more you connect emotionally to a topic in the real world, the easier you will learn the English.

In fact, the perfect situation is when you are so interested in the topic that you completely forget you are listening to or reading English. When this happens, language learning happens without any effort at all.

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TOO EASY? TOO DIFFICULT? OR JUST RIGHT?

How should you decide what to listen to or read? Often, my students worry that they'll pick something too easy. My recommendation: it's best to pick something you can understand without too much difficulty, but that stretches you a little. Linguists call this "comprehensible input plus one" which they describe as material that is just one level above where you are currently. They believe students learn a second language best when they are in a low stress situation and are interested in the topic being discussed.

An easy test of difficulty is whether or not you need a dictionary. You should be able to read and listen quickly, with only a few unknown words per page. Because you understand most of the material, you can guess the meaning of those unknown words without interrupting yourself. Just keep going, because you will eventually encounter those same new words again. When you do, you'll make another, even better guess about the meaning. Eventually, you'll learn this new vocabulary simply by enjoying real English without using a dictionary.

When you listen to real English materials, you get the real English that is actually used by Americans, Canadians, Australians, the British, etc. That's how we really speak. By replacing textbooks with these materials, you will be prepared for real world communication. When someone greets you on the street, you'll understand them. When someone uses a common idiom, you'll understand them. Eventually, you'll completely understand TV shows and movies too.

Rule Six is the key: learn real English.

LEARNING CASUAL CONVERSATION

In San Francisco where I used to live, I met many students with high English test scores, and great grades i

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their English classes. Yet, when they sat in a café, they couldn't understand what people were saying aroun them. They had absolutely no idea what normal Americans were saying.

They had been trained in formal, academic English – with a focus on grammar rules. I think this is totall backwards.

Common, casual conversation should be the first thing you learn. The first need, after all, is to communicat with other people. You want to chat with people in a café. You want to make friends and understand what they ar saying. You want to talk to your co-workers. You want to understand TV shows and movies.

Common English should be what you learn first… then, and only if you need it, focus on academic English.

To help you, we have a new collection of recorded, real, spontaneous conversations. These are rea conversations with friends, family, and business partners. We aren't reading scripts. We aren't actors. You'll lear the real English that we use every day with each other – including slang, idioms, swear words, jokes, cultura references, etc.

You'll hear filler words, too (such as "ah," "um," "you know," "like"), which are a common element c English that is missing from textbooks. You'll hear the natural rhythm of English – the way we go back and fortl the way we use phrases, the ways we interrupt each other.

We have all the conversations transcribed, and include short notes to explain the slang, idioms, etc. that yo can't find in a dictionary. We did this because there's a huge need. In fact, it's probably the biggest need ou members have.

My friends and I created a course from these conversations, with text and explanations. You can find them a www.learnrealenglish.com

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CHAPTER 15

The Seventh Rule: Learn English With Compelling Stories

The primary purpose of Effortless English™ is to teach you to speak and understand English quickly, correctly and automatically. That "automatic" part is what separates this method from so many others, and automatic comes from thinking in English.

When you think in English, you no longer translate. You no longer think about grammar or pronunciation. The language has become a deep part of you, just like your own native language.

At this stage, you have achieved effortless English. You understand instantly, with no stress. Because you think in English, words flow out of your mouth quickly and easily. You use correct grammar, yet never consider grammar rules. If someone asks how you do it, you probably say, "I don't know. I just know what sounds right."

Speed is the most obvious change at this stage. You are able to instantly understand and instantly respond. The hesitation is gone. The strain, the stress, the doubt, the confusion – all gone. You are like the professional soccer player, performing with power and grace.

At this point on the road to fluency, you have learned most of the Effortless English™ system. You have just one more rule to learn and I have saved the best for last.

Rule Seven is the method that trains speed. So what is it? Listen-and-answer stories. That's the seventh and final rule of Effortless English™. *Learn to think in English with listen-and-answer stories.*

What are listen-and-answer stories, or, as I sometimes call them, mini-stories? Well, remember in the past when you went to English school? You probably were taught with a lot of listen and repeat drills. You know, when the teacher would say, "Repeat after me. Hi, how are you?" And everyone in the class would say in unison, "Hi, how are you?" Then the teacher would continue, "I'm fine, and you?" Then all of the class together said, "I'm fine, and you?" This is listen and repeat. It's an old way to learn English. But, it's not powerful.

Why? When you listen and repeat, you don't need to think in English. You don't

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need to think at all. You just repeat what the teacher said. You don't even need to understand what you are saying, but still you repeat. It's a mindless exercise with little benefit.

Now sometimes, after you've gotten used to listening and repeating in one of these traditional classes, the teacher will start asking you questions so you can answer with some of the responses you've learned. For example, instead of having you repeat, she'll ask: "How are you?" You'll say, "I'm fine, and you?" This is a bit better, since you're at least answering questions and not just repeating phrases you may or may not understand.

The problem is, these are scripted answers. When the teacher asks, "How are you?" you always say, "I'm fine, and you?" You already know what the teacher is going to say and you already know what you are going to say. Yet, real conversations are unpredictable. You never know what is coming next. You have to be ready for anything. Listen-and-answer stories are much more powerful.

Perhaps the first question we should ask is, "Why stories?" In Rule Five, I taught you about point-of-view stories. In Rule Six, I encouraged you to read and listen to authentic materials, especially stories. Now I'm telling you the key to automatic English is listen-and-answer stories.

Stories are incredibly powerful, because they are an ideal way to deliver information to the brain. Human beings have used stories to teach and learn for thousands of years, since well before the invention of writing. What makes them powerful?

Stories are emotional. We love the heroes and hate the villains, and that's important because emotions create stronger memories. This is why religions have used stories for thousands of years to teach their principles. They could just teach the principles directly, but they know that stories create a stronger and deeper impression.

And when a story is designed to be strange, funny, or highly emotional, it is even easier to remember. This is why listen-and-answer stories use strange characters and exaggerated events. Which is easier to remember: a normal person with brown hair, or a person who is only one meter tall with green hair? If you meet both briefly at a party, which are you most likely to remember a year later? Usually it's the one that is not "normal."

In addition to being strange, funny, or exaggerated, listen-and-answer stories use a very specific technique called "asking a story." Please note, I did not say *telling* a story. I said *asking* a story. This is a technique developed by Blaine Ray. The teacher creates the story by asking a lot of very simple and easy questions. Why?

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Because the questions train you to understand and respond more quickly. A listen-and-answer story is not a passive activity. You must constantly understand a barrage of endless questions, and you must instantly respond to them. The teacher slowly builds the story by adding more details.

An important aspect of these stories is that the questions are always easy and your answers are always short. Most of the time, you will answer with only a couple of words. The focus of these stories is speed, not length. Remember, to achieve the highest levels of English speaking, you must be fast. You must understand and respond instantly.

As you listen, sometimes the teacher will ask a question and you won't know the answer. When this happens, you are encouraged to immediately shout out a guess.

So the process is a non-stop series of questions and answers. Through this process, you overwhelm your slow analytic brain. Because there are so many questions and you must answer so quickly, there simply isn't time to think about grammar, vocabulary, or anything else. This is how listen-and-answer stories train you for speed.

When you use these listen-and-answer stories, you teach yourself to understand quickly and to respond quickly. You have to speak quickly and automatically, without thinking, "What does that word mean?" That's why these stories are so powerful. You learn to think in English, and you learn to speak quickly without translating.

How Mini-Stories Work

Let me give you a very easy and simple sample of a question-and-answer mini-story, just a couple of sentences. Now, imagine you have a short little story about a monkey. In listen-and-answer stories, it would work this way. As a teacher, I would say: "Class, there was a monkey. Was there a monkey?" You would shout: "Yes!" You could also shout, "Yes, there was a monkey!" but a one word answer is sufficient.

Then I would say, "Was there a monkey or was there a girl? You would immediately shout: "A monkey – a monkey."

And I would say, "Ah, so there was a monkey?" Again, you would shout, "Yes, a monkey."

I would say, "Ah, I see there was a monkey. What was his name?" Here you don't know, so you guess quickly – John or Jim – anything – you would shout an answer as fast as possible.

"Actually," I would say, "his name was Reggie. Was Reggie a monkey or was

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Reggie a girl?" And you would shout again, "A monkey!"

This continues for twenty minutes or more, slowly building the story. I continue to ask more questions, and because you are constantly answering questions, you learn to think in English. You learn to respond, to answer faster and faster in English. Now of course, this example is very simple. My real mini-story lessons are longer and much more interesting, and there are a lot more questions. (You can download a free sample Effortless English™ lesson, including a listen-and-answer story, at: http://EffortlessEnglishClub.com/point-of-view-grammar.) And when you use these lessons, you will gradually train yourself to think in English.

Listen-and-answer stories are a form of active brain exercise. Because they are stories, you can visualize what's happening. You learn the phrases, grammar and vocabulary in a meaningful context. Because the stories are strange and funny, you remember the English used in them much longer. Because you constantly answer questions, you learn to think and respond in English faster and faster.

In fact, a good listen-and-answer story skillfully combines all elements of the Effortless English™ system into one powerful learning tool. I know of no better tool for rapid improvement in spoken English.

HOW KNOWING THE CULTURE HELPS YOU SPEAK MORE FLUENTLY

When I put together mini-stories, I try to make them funny or strange so that they're easy to remember. I als try to reflect American culture, as youll see in the practice example at the end of this chapter.

Why do I do this? Well, research has shown that you will learn a language more quickly if you can begin t identify with the culture. For example, according to Dr. Stephen Krashen and contrary to popular belief, eve people who learn English as an adult can develop a perfect accent. What holds them back is not some inability t make new sounds, but rather their connection to their home country and its culture. When a child comes to th U.S. and learns English, they really want to fit in, so they will do everything they can to be like other American Adults, on the other hand, have more established identities and tend to stay more rooted to their native culture.

But there are ways to get around this. The best thing you can do if you're trying to learn English is find som part of American culture that you really love (or British or Australian culture, if you're studying English there and can immerse yourself in. It can be anything – music, movies, food, martial arts, whatever – as long as yo find it interesting. It's especially useful if you can find something that is unique to the culture, like America football, for example. Most important, you must connect to and share your interest with native English speaker who love the same thing.

Try it and see. This will not only help you speak more fluently, but it will also help your pronunciation as wel

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Movement and Mini-Stories

I mentioned the importance of movement in earlier chapters. Dr. James Asher's total physical response (TPR) system emphasizes the link between movement and learning. Blaine Ray's TPRS method (Total Physical Response using Storytelling) links movement to stories. Effortless English™ uses both systems.

When I do a live event, one of the first things I tell my students is that they need to make listening to a mini-story a whole body activity. Much of the power of (listen-and-answer) mini-stories comes from how powerful your responses are.

In any (listen-and-answer) mini story, you will hear only three types of sentences. You must respond to each type of sentence in a particular way. The first type of sentence is a statement. A statement is not a question, but you should still respond by saying "ahhhhhhhhh." Remember, stronger movements and emotions are more powerful, so don't just say "ahhhh," shout it and move your body at the same time. Pretend the statement is the most interesting information you have ever heard! Nod your head and smile as you respond.

The second type of sentence is a question you know the answer to. When you hear this kind of sentence, you want to shout an answer as loud as you can, using a full body gesture that shows you're really excited about it. Exaggerate. Throw your arms up as you shout, "Yes!"

The third and final type of sentence you will hear in a mini story is a question where you don't know the answer. As I mentioned previously, in this case your job is to shout a guess as quickly as possible. As with the other sentence types, shout your guess loudly and use exaggerated gestures as you do so.

The combination of speed, shouting, and movement locks in the memory of the sentence. Instead of just sound, you're getting sound and movement and emotions. You'll need fewer repetitions to remember it. You'll also start to connect speaking English to that excited enthusiastic feeling because, at the same time, you are creating a positive anchor.

There's no stress with mini-stories because anyone can say yes or no. That's why the questions are designed to be super easy. It is not a memory exercise, it's a response exercise. You bypass the whole analysis part and go straight into fast responses.

Another exercise we do at live events is story retelling. Once students have listened to a story and they know it well, they retell it to a friend. They stand up and use their whole body with big, strong gestures and tell the story in a loud, enthusiastic voice. The idea is to tell the story as quickly as possible, focusing on

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speed, not accuracy.

You will do this as well. After you have mastered the questions and answers, turn off the audio mini story. In a peak emotional state, retell the story out loud as fast as you can. Shout the story and use big gestures as you speak. Make it a game and aim for speed. It's okay to make a mistake and it's even okay to change the details of the story. Just practice speaking as fast as you possibly can.

The point is that the best learning happens when you are in a peak state, involved and active. My live lessons are like "English rock concerts" and everyone has tremendous energy. To recreate this at home, put on your favorite music. Close the door so no one can see you. Now jump around just before you do the mini-story. Feeling energized, begin listening to the mini-story. As you're doing the mini-story, get excited. Get crazy. Really shout out the answers. Finish with a fast retelling of the story. Remember, the more powerful your responses are and the more energy you use, the deeper your learning will go.

Practice Exercise

Here is a more advanced mini-story, without the questions. Note: the bolded words are the vocabulary I would teach my students in advance at a seminar. I've included part of the transcript to give you an idea.

For a full audio version of this lesson, including the questions, go to:
http://effortlessenglishclub.com/point-of-view-grammar

Listen and Answer Mini Story: The Race

It's five o'clock and Allen is riding his motorcycle in San Francisco. He is riding down Van Ness Street and comes to a stop light.

A red Ferrari pulls up next to him. The driver's wearing dark sun glasses. He looks over at Allen.

Allen looks at him and realizes that the driver is Tom!

Tom sneers at Allen. He says, "When the light turns green, let's race."

Allen says, "All right, you're on!"

Tom says, "I'm gonna smoke you!"

Allen says, "You wish. I'm gonna beat you and your sorry-ass car."

Allen and Tom wait at the light. They rev their engines.

Suddenly, the light turns green. Allen and Tom take off! They zoom down Van Ness at top speed.

Tom is winning.

But suddenly, blue and red lights appear behind Tom – it's the police. They pull him over.

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Allen zooms past Tom, laughing. He yells, “Better luck next time!”

Allen is the winner!

Download the audio version of this story, including the questions. Listen and respond to the story every day for seven days or more (and remember, more is better because of deep learning). Each time you finish listening and responding, turn off the audio and retell the story as fast as possible. Notice as your speaking gets faster each day.

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CHAPTER 16

Your Daily English Learning Plan

So are you ready to speak English effortlessly? Are you ready to feel relaxed and confident every time you speak? Are you ready to let go of grammar study, textbooks, vocabulary lists, worksheets and drills? Are you ready to rediscover the joy of learning? Are you ready to focus on goals that inspire you? Are you ready to focus on communication with real people? Are you ready to "play English" instead of studying it?

You now know the core Effortless English™ system. I have laid out a plan to help you learn to speak English naturally, fluently and with ease. Using the latest research and my own experience from more than two decades of teaching English language classes to thousands of students all over the world, I've shown why traditional language teaching methods don't work. If you've been struggling with English for a while, I've also tried to give you hope. It's not that you're bad at English. Trust me. You just haven't been taught the right way, the natural way.

When you learn English naturally – the Effortless English™ way – you finally escape from the hidden curriculum. You don't rely on textbooks or repetition drills. Instead you use the simple methods of the Effortless English™ system:

- Anchor positive peak emotions to English
- Change limiting beliefs into empowering beliefs
- Energize and move while learning
- Direct and control your internal movies
- Focus on learning phrases not words
- Don't study grammar
- Learn with your ears, not your eyes; devoting 80 percent of your studying time to listening
- Learn deeply; be willing to put in the time and the numerous repetitions necessary to truly master spoken English
- Use point-of-view stories to master grammar
- Learn real English by focusing on authentic English materials that native speakers use
- Learn to think in English with listen-and-answer stories, which train you to respond automatically without translation

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The seven rules are the key to the Effortless English™ method. This method is the motor that will drive you to English fluency. But like any good engine, the Effortless English™ method is only as effective as the fuel you put into it. The fuel you need to learn English, or anything, really, is the emotional energy and motivation you bring to your studies. That's why I've focused so much on the psychological aspects of learning. I've shown you how to generate the necessary emotional fuel for learning English by setting big goals. I've discussed how moving and using your body can help you learn more quickly. I've also demonstrated ways to channel your fears into the energy necessary to speak powerful and relaxed English.

All you need to do now is get out there and do the work. After all, it's not enough to just know these steps, you have to take action. "Work", however, is the wrong word to use because the Effortless English™ system is most effective when combined with a playful mindset. You no longer need to fear mistakes. You no longer need to find the "one right answer." You no longer need to stress over exams or grades.

In fact, you will no longer "study English," you will "play English." You will enjoy your natural curiosity. You'll use fun, interesting, compelling, real materials. You'll feel energized and excited. You'll move your body. You'll smile and laugh while learning.

Fortunately, there's never been a better time to learn English. There have never been more resources available. Thanks to the Internet, there are few things you can't access online – whether it's a website on English learning, or articles, books, audio and video that can all be used to practice. You can even hire a teacher or get a language partner to work with you online.

You are no longer dependent on schools. You don't need to follow the hidden curriculum any longer. You are now the master of your own education. English mastery is within your reach.

A Day in the Life of Effortless English™

I've done my best to explain the Effortless English™ system. At this point, maybe you've decided you like the sound of learning English the natural way. You want to speak English effortlessly. The question is: How do you get started? How can you take all of what I've told you and put it into a typical day of learning English? What would that day look like?

It is vitally important that you establish daily English learning rituals. What is a ritual? A ritual is a habit that is emotional, even sacred, for you. Your progress

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depends on consistency. By continually making tiny improvements each week, you will accelerate on the road to fluency. Each improvement builds on the ones that came before, creating momentum.

Week by week, your listening improves. For a while, nothing seems to happen with your speaking. You understand more but speaking seems to be no different. Then, suddenly, after a few months, something amazing happens. English phrases begin to come out more quickly and easily. It happens a little at first, then more and more each week. By the time you reach six months, you notice significant improvement in your speaking.

This improvement is built through consistent daily rituals. When I teach seminars, I encourage students to create Effortless English™ rituals for the morning, the day, and the evening. For example:

In the morning, immediately upon waking, play your favorite energizing music. As you listen to this music, take out your list of positive English experiences and empowering beliefs. Read each item on the list, and remember the emotion of the positive experience. Next, think about your biggest goals for English – how you will use the language to create a better life for yourself and your family. Finally, use the "swish" technique ten or more times to direct and program your power movies.

At this point you are feeling great, so you've worked yourself into a peak emotional state. With the music still playing, jump, smile and shout until you feel fantastic! Now you are ready to listen to English. Play an easy English audio. Ideally, you will play a listen-and-answer mini story, followed by several point-of-view stories. As you listen, shout your answers to the questions and use big movements and gestures. If, at any point, you notice your energy dropping, play the music again and create a peak emotional state. Then start listening to English again.

This whole morning ritual might take only thirty minutes. You start your day feeling great, improving your English. At that point, it's probably time to go to work, or school. Use your travel time to listen to more English. Since you'll probably be around other people, this is a good time to listen quietly to an audiobook.

At lunch you'll have more free time, so spend another thirty minutes or more listening to a mini-story or point-of-view story. If you have privacy, shout your answers just as you did at home.

Travel home is another opportunity for more easy English listening. Perhaps you repeat that same audiobook chapter from the morning. If you stay at home with your kids, find moments of listening time when your kids are playing or napping. If you walk somewhere, or stand in line, listen to English. Use every available free

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moment to listen.

When you are home in the evening, do more English listening. Ideally, choose the same time every night and once again listen to the same mini story and point-of-view stories in a peak state. This might take you another thirty minutes. Go into your room if necessary to shout out the answers and really put your full energy and emotion into it.

Then you might use the movie technique, studying and practicing a movie scene. And even when you are doing other tasks, such as cooking dinner, always have an English audio playing in the background. Surround yourself with the sounds of English all day long.

By building these daily habits, and dividing your study time into four or more chunks throughout the day, you create intensity. The next day, you repeat the same rituals. Because you want to learn deeply, you repeat the same audios again. Listen to the same mini-story and point-of-view stories. Listen to the same audiobook. Watch the same movie scene. Do this for seven days or more to really master each of those audios. Next week, start over.

The great thing about audio story lessons is that they can be done anywhere. You can read and listen at the same time. Or you can take a walk and listen, which is even better. Do whatever works for you. Just do it, and soon you'll be speaking English fluently and with ease.

For best results, dedicate yourself to an intense schedule for six months. During that time, listen to English every free moment you have, however short. Always carry English audios on your phone or audio player. Always have it with you. Use private time for mini stories, point-of-view stories, and the movie technique. When in public, listen quietly to audiobooks or other English audios. Fill every moment of your life with English.

This consistent habit is the secret to your success. By focusing intensely for six months, you will make dramatic improvements in your English speaking ability. You will develop confidence and power. No, you will not speak perfectly, but no one is perfect, not even native speakers.

You have used the old methods for years and are not happy with the results. Give Effortless English™ at least six months. During this time, be fully committed to the system. At the end of six months, notice the improvement and compare it to the old methods. You will be pleasantly surprised.

You will, finally, develop the ability to speak effortless English. The words will come out automatically. The grammar will improve automatically. The feelings of confidence will appear automatically.

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Welcome to Effortless English™.

In the final section of this book I will discuss advanced topics and common questions. However, you should not focus on these advanced methods until you have spent at least six months using the core Effortless English™ system as described. Most learners will only need this core system.

LEARNING ENGLISH ONLINE

As I noted earlier, the web now has everything you need to learn English online. You can buy English lessons, find a private teacher, use a translation dictionary, save and review new words, improve your English grammar, and chat with other English students. All of this, you can do online. This has been great for language learners. Even students who find it difficult to get regular access to native English speakers can now hear and speak English every day by simply logging onto the Internet. Here are some of my recommendations on getting the best from the web:

- **Download MP3 English Lessons From The Internet** Your first step is to find natural English courses online. You want lessons that use real English, not grammar or reading lessons. You also want audio lessons, not textbooks.

  Audio lessons have several advantages. One advantage is that you download them immediately. Another advantage is that they are portable – simply put the lessons on your phone or audio player and you can learn English anywhere, anytime. As you know, audio lessons in general are much more effective than written textbooks.

- **Find An Online English Community** There's no need to pay for an expensive tutor or English school. You can find English conversation partners online, often at very reasonable prices. Most conversation partners use voice chat programs which make it easy to talk to anyone in the world for free. Thus, you can easily find a native speaker or an advanced English learner – no matter where you live. Some people use video chat – even better!

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A community also gives you support and encouragement. You'll get great ideas from other learners. You'll also make new friends from all over the world. Members of Effortless English™ courses automatically join our international online community and can use our forums and social site.

- **Online English Dictionary and Word Saver** As you use your English lessons, you'll sometimes want to look up new words in a dictionary or find a translation in your language. Online dictionaries are simply great – much faster than text.

  You will need two types of dictionaries. The first is a standard dictionary. This can be a translation dictionary for your own language or you can use an English-only version. The other type of dictionary you need is an idiomatic dictionary. As you might guess, this type of dictionary contains the common English idioms (phrases) you won't find in a standard dictionary.

- **Audio and Video** The Internet is a buffet of authentic audio and video material As I noted in a previous chapter, you can find podcasts and audio books on virtually any topic with a simple Internet search. You can watch American and British movies and television on a variety of websites as well.

  More advanced students can listen to copies of actual conversations. These are best for learners who need to understand casual speech.

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CHAPTER 17

The Power of Pleasure Reading

You are using the Effortless English™ system every day. You focus most of your time on listening to compelling stories. You listen to point-of-view stories to learn grammar naturally. You learn deeply. As a result, your English speaking is improving. Each month you speak more easily and effortlessly. Your confidence is growing. You are mastering the core, high-frequency English used most commonly by native speakers.

As you continue improving, eventually you will want to advance to a higher level of English. Perhaps you want to study abroad in America or Canada. Perhaps you want to work for an international company that requires English. Perhaps you need to pass an exam such as the TOEFL, TOEIC, or IELTS.

When you reach this point, what is the best way to improve your English reading? How can you learn to read faster? How can you use reading to learn more words faster? How can you improve your reading comprehension? What's the best way to combine reading and listening?

Most schools teach reading using an academic skill-building approach. Typically, students read difficult articles and then answer questions about them to test their comprehension. Students are taught how to identify the main idea of the article, how to answer multiple choice questions about the article, and how to guess the meaning of unknown words. They are then graded on their performance.

During my teaching career, I have found that most students are bored by this approach. Worse, a tremendous amount of research shows that this method is inferior to one that is much more enjoyable and natural. Students who use this natural method write better, have better vocabularies, have better grammar comprehension and perform better on the TOEFL test than those who use the traditional methods found in schools and textbooks.

Just what is this powerful natural method? The research is clear that simply reading for pleasure is the most effective reading method of all. In other words, all you need to do is read interesting and fairly easy books in English. No exercises are necessary. No tests are necessary. No complex reading strategies are necessary. No lessons are necessary. No required books are necessary.

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Easy High Volume Pleasure Reading

There is no big secret to reading in English. In fact, the answer couldn't be simpler. You need to read books (in English) that are interesting and fairly easy to you. You need to read them every day and you need to read a lot of them.

It turns out that volume is the key to improvements with reading. In other words, the key to better English reading is to read more pages every day, and more books every month. Choosing extremely difficult books is counter-productive. Some learners think they'll improve faster by reading difficult material but the opposite is true. The best reading materials are ones you can read without the use of a dictionary.

Compelling content is also vital. You must choose books that are extremely interesting to you. Of course, this will be different for everyone. If you love science, then you should read easy books about science and science fiction. If you love romance, then you should read easy romance books. If you love comic books, then read your favorite comic books in English!

In the beginning, you may need to read books that are designed for young adults. Read as many as you can every week. The more you read compelling material, the faster your reading will become and the faster it will improve. Soon you'll be reading novels and non-fiction books that are designed for adults.

Kill Two Birds With One Stone

The very best approach to pleasure reading is to combine it with listening. When you listen and read at the same time, you "kill two birds with one stone." In other words, you accomplish two goals at the same time: you improve your listening (and thus your speaking) and you improve your reading ability.

Whenever possible, get the audiobook version of the book you are reading. Be sure to get the "unabridged" audiobook. The unabridged version will have every word of the book — in audio form. You'll then be able to listen to each chapter as you read along at the same time. By doing this, you'll automatically learn the correct pronunciation of new words you encounter. You'll also learn to read a bit faster as you must follow along with a native speaker who is reading the book aloud for you.

Combined listening and reading will build both your written and your spoken vocabulary. You will continue learning new English phrases from real natural materials at a more advanced level. As your English ability becomes more advanced, novels, nonfiction books and audiobooks will become increasingly important. At the advanced level, you'll spend most of your time reading and

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listening to books that are compelling to you.

It's as simple as that! Read what you love and read a lot. Listen to the audiobook version whenever possible. This is the fastest and most enjoyable way to improve your English reading. As we'll see in the next chapter, it's also an excellent way to improve your writing.

For Practice

Go online and buy an English language novel for young adults. I recommend starting with a series of books such as "The Hardy Boys" or "Nancy Drew."

Read one chapter in the book each day. On a calendar, track the number of pages you read.

After one week, increase average daily page count. Read a little more. Your goal every week is to read more pages than you read in the previous week.

When you finish the first book, read another in the series. Continue reading books in the series until you have completed all of them. You will then be ready for somewhat more difficult material.

Of course, get the audio versions of your books whenever possible.

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CHAPTER 18

The Secret To Good English Writing

Years ago, I was teaching an advanced writing class in San Francisco. My students were foreign learners who hoped to enter an American university. They had just finished writing an essay about why they wanted to study in the USA.

Each student handed me their paper and then walked out of class. I sat down, grabbed the first one, and began to read. I read the first paragraph and was completely confused. The introduction was a mess. The sentences were extremely long and complex and were written in the passive voice. The vocabulary was complex and was used incorrectly.

As I continued to read, I was horrified. The student's essay was unintelligible. I couldn't even understand his main idea. Frustrated, I put the paper aside and grabbed another. I began to read the second essay and encountered the exact same problems. Once again there were long complex sentences that were impossible to follow or understand. Once again the student used complex vocabulary that was inappropriate and used incorrectly. Once again I had no idea what she was trying to say.

Bewildered, I went through every essay and found the same problems in each of them: convoluted sentences, overly complex vocabulary, overuse of the passive voice, and no clear message or point. The essays were unreadable.

"What a mess," I said to myself as I put down the last paper.

The Problem of Academic Writing

Why were these essays so bad, and why were they bad in such similar ways? The answer lies, again, with the hidden curriculum of schools. Each of my students had learned English writing in school. In their classes, they had been taught an academic style of writing that emphasized complex sentences, complex vocabulary, and the passive voice.

Both teachers and students use this style of writing in an attempt to sound intellectual. The truth is, however, that most academic writing is terrible. Academic journals, for example, are filled with convoluted sentences that seem designed to be as confusing as possible. Students, influenced by their professors, attempt to model this kind of writing. As my San Francisco class showed, the results are typically disastrous.

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Write Like Hemingway

In contrast to academics, Nobel prize-winning writer Ernest Hemingway was famous for his simple, direct style of writing. Hemingway typically used short sentences, simple phrases, and common vocabulary to create beautiful and powerful stories.

Though you are unlikely to write as well as Hemingway, his general style of writing is the best one to use. Most English learners write badly because they make their writing overly complex. They are trying to sound "intellectual" but instead end up sounding unintelligible. The solution is to write more conversationally. In other words, write like you speak.

Conversational writing is similar to (though not exactly the same) as speaking. When you speak English, you likely use clear, simple, direct sentences. You express your ideas as simply as possible.

Short, direct sentences are best. Break long sentences into a series of short, simple sentences. In most cases, use the active voice rather than the passive. Model your writing on journalists and Hemingway rather than on professors, journal articles, or other academic material.

Good writing is a process of cutting and simplifying. Your goal, therefore, is to communicate your ideas using as few words as possible. The simpler you make your writing, the more clear and powerful it will be.

How To Develop Your English Writing

So how do you develop a simple, conversational, and direct writing style? It turns out you already know the answer! In the last chapter we discussed the importance of pleasure reading. The research shows that this kind of reading is not only a great way to improve your reading speed, reading comprehension, and vocabulary — it's also the best way to improve your writing.

Just as listening is the key to speaking, reading is the key to writing. The same principle applies: Understandable, compelling input is the foundation for effective output. In other words, listening is the foundation for speaking and reading is the foundation for writing.

Just as you focused on fairly easy listening to improve your speaking, you'll focus on fairly easy reading to improve your writing. Just as you focused on listening to real stories and authentic audios to master English speaking, you'll read stories and authentic books to master English writing. You needed a lot of listening to speak effortlessly and you'll now need a lot of reading in order to write effortlessly.

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This is why your number one activity for writing is reading. Nothing beats high-volume pleasure reading for improving written grammar, written vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling, and clarity. The more you read for pleasure, the more you intuitively absorb English sentence structures. In other words, you learn to write best by modeling your writing after good writers. The best way to imitate good writers is to read their books.

Remember, when it comes to pleasure reading, the amount is what is most important. Your goal is to constantly increase the number of pages you read in English every week. Read novels that you love. Read non-fiction books that fascinate you. Read comic books. Read simple articles. It's the amount you read that is most important, not how difficult it is. In fact, easier material is usually best, especially for the purpose of improving your writing.

Daily Writing Practice: Speed Writing

Too many English learners focus themselves on writing academic essays. As noted previously, these kinds of essays are often overly complex. Even when well written, academic writing is challenging and is one of the most advanced levels of writing.

This is why most learners benefit by first focusing on simpler forms of writing. One of the best ways to do this is to write a daily journal. Daily journal writing helps you to improve sentence structure, write faster and write more clearly.

The key to journal writing is to keep it short and simple. Each day, choose one clear topic to write about. You might write about something you did the day before. You might write about one of your goals. You could write about something you recently read, communicating your thoughts or feelings about it.

The next step is to set a timer, with an alarm, for ten minutes. When you are ready to begin, press "start" on the timer and write as quickly as possible. The most important point is to never take a break. You must write during the entire ten minutes without pausing. Do not pause to think of what to write next. Do not pause to correct mistakes. Do not pause to think of a better phrase. Do not let your hand stop moving — continue writing anything that comes into your head for the entire ten minutes.

This technique is called "timed writing" and is commonly used by professional authors. By writing quickly, without pausing, you bypass your critical brain and learn to let the words flow out. When you first try this you will probably feel frustrated. You'll struggle to think of what to write. Your writing will be disorganized. You'll make a lot of mistakes. Don't worry.

As you continue doing timed writings each day, you will improve. Your writing

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speed and fluency will get faster. You'll find yourself naturally using phrases that you read in a book or article. Because you are writing fast, you'll be forced to write more simply. You won't have time to think about grammar rules.

Week by week, your sentence structure will improve. Perhaps more importantly, your confidence with English writing will improve. If you feel confident enough, you could post your journal publicly online by writing it as a blog. Each day, publish a new post of your timed writing.

Rewriting Is The Secret To Good Writing

Reading for pleasure and daily timed writing are the foundation of your English writing practice. However, you will not become a great writer by only using these two methods. In fact, your timed writings will probably never be great. They'll always have mistakes and problems, and that's fine.

In fact, your imperfect journal writing will be in good company. This is a secret that few writers discuss, but all know: almost all first drafts are bad! In other words, even professional native speakers, who get paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for their books, can write badly. All writers make grammar mistakes. All writers make spelling mistakes.

Great writers know that the secret to good writing is rewriting. You see, with writing we have a great advantage compared to speaking. We have time. You have time to read what you wrote. You have time to identify your mistakes. You have time to correct those mistakes. You have time to completely rewrite everything. You even have time to show your writing to other people and get their help!

For casual writing, such as a blog post or email, it's not usually necessary to rewrite. However, for important communication such as business proposals, school essays, important emails, professional articles, etc., rewriting is absolutely essential.

The good news is that you don't need to write perfectly. It is acceptable to make mistakes in your first draft. We all do. It's even acceptable for your first draft to be terrible. With writing, only the final draft is essential and it must be mistake free.

You create your great final draft through the editing process. First, use timed writing to quickly write your first draft. Get your ideas on paper. Make mistakes. Just write quickly.

Once you have the first draft, you have something to work with. Think of yourself as a sculptor and the first draft is your clay. Read the draft, imagining yourself as the final reader (your audience). Are the ideas clear? Is everything stated as directly as possible? What's confusing? Are the ideas well organized?

Undoubtedly, you will find many problems. That's when you rewrite. Correct the

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problems. Cut the mistakes. Rewrite whole sections, or the whole thing, if necessary. Your focus is to make the second draft simpler, clearer and more direct.

When you finish your second draft, save it and put it aside. If possible, wait a day and then reread it. Again imagine you are the final reader. Look for overly complex sentences. Look for unclear ideas. Fix the problems again and rewrite for the second time.

For many kinds of writing, two rewrites will be enough. However, if the writing is particularly important, you'll need to do more. For this kind of writing, it's best to get outside help from an editor. Your editor might be a friend, or a tutor, or even a paid professional. This person will read your third draft and offer advice. Ask them to quickly rewrite any sections that are problematic.

Working with an editor will help you create the best writing possible. It's not always necessary, but do it whenever you can, and carefully notice their rewrite suggestions.

After a few rewrites with your editor, you'll be ready to publish what you have written. Before you do so, be sure to use spell check to catch spelling mistakes you may have missed.

For Practice

Do a ten minute timed writing exercise every day. During this time, write as quickly as possible without stopping.

The next day, reread the previous day's journal entry. Quickly identify problems and mistakes. Rewrite your journal entry to make it clearer. Cut out anything that is unnecessary.

On day three, you'll go back to step one and do another timed writing. Continue following this pattern, alternating timed writing with rewrites.

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CHAPTER 19

Why You Should Not Practice Speaking

During my first English teaching job in Korea, I worked with a staff member named Seo. Seo worked in the sales office of the school. His job was to convince parents to enroll their children. Seo was an energetic and friendly guy. He was also determined to improve his English, which wasn't great.

Since Seo worked at an English school which employed over twenty native speakers, his strategy was to "practice" his English with us at every opportunity. Each day Seo would look for one of the teachers. When he'd find one, he'd corner them and talk as much as he could using broken English. He was especially interested in idioms and made a great effort to use them during these chats.

During my year in Korea, I was cornered by Seo many times. Though he was a likable person, I quickly began to dread my encounters with him. The other teachers felt the same. Whenever we saw Seo, we walked the other way. No one wanted to talk to him!

What was happening? Were we being mean? The truth is, we avoided Seo because he was trying to use us as free English tutors. Rather than communicate with us as friends, he "practiced" English on us. He asked us to correct his mistakes. He asked us to confirm that he was using idioms correctly. He asked for pronunciation advice. Chats with Seo soon felt like teaching an English class rather than communicating with a friend.

By seeing us merely as practice opportunities, Seo killed the possibility for a true friendship. We felt he was trying to use us. Conversations with him were unnatural and annoying because his focus was solely on the English language rather than on true communication.

Because of this approach, Seo never made friends with any of the teachers. Ironically, had he just talked to us as people, without focusing on English, he would have easily made a number of English-speaking friends. He would have had the opportunity for many more real conversations.

Unfortunately, Seo is not unique. Many learners are obsessed with "practicing" their English. Because their focus is on practice, these learners search desperately for "conversation partners." Yet, by insisting that others correct their mistakes or offer English advice, these learners usually drive away native speakers who would

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otherwise be happy to chat with them.

This is why you must not try to “practice” English with native speakers. Instead of practicing, simply focus on being a true friend. Communicate, without focusing on the English language. Talk about your shared interests. Ask questions and listen to their answers. Show your appreciation and understanding. In other words, treat them just as you would a friend who speaks your own language.

One of the best ways to do this is to meet people who share a common passion. For example, if you love movies, join online forums dedicated to movie lovers. Join international fan clubs dedicated to your favorite movies or musicians. Connect with others who share a hobby with you.

When you communicate with these people, talk about your shared passion. Never ask them to correct your English. Don’t apologize for your English. Don’t ask for any English advice at all. They are not your English teachers, they are your friends. You’ll learn far more by just chatting with them than by trying to make them your personal tutor.

Error Correction Is Useless Anyway

A meta research study at the University of Southern California found that error correction has no impact at all on spoken English. In other words, students whose verbal errors were corrected showed no improvement, and were similar to students who were not corrected. The conclusion: verbal error correction is useless.

In fact, it’s worse than useless. Error correction harms you by forcing you to constantly think about grammar. Instead of focusing on communicating your ideas, you increasingly focus on just the language itself. Doing so usually leads to more anxiety, which we know slows your learning and harms your performance. This is why you must never ask a teacher or friend to correct your spoken English. It is a waste of their time and yours. Error correction will also poison your relationship with English speakers and drive them away, just as Seo annoyed the teachers at the school in Korea.

This truth is a difficult one for many learners. Yet the research is clear. You will get no benefit from having your spoken errors corrected (note that writing is different because it is a slow process that can be done consciously and methodically). So rather than ask for error correction, ask others to avoid correcting your errors. If you pay a conversation partner, ask them to avoid correcting your mistakes. If they notice an error, ask them to simply restate the idea using correct English. By hearing your idea restated correctly, you’ll intuitively learn to improve without thinking consciously about English.

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Listen During Most Of Your Speaking Time

When thinking of conversations, most learners focus on speech. They worry about speaking correctly. They worry about remembering vocabulary words. They fear making mistakes. In my experience, most English learners focus 90% of their energy on speaking.

Yet, the true power of real life conversations comes from listening, not speaking. Think about it. When you talk to a native speaker you have a tremendous opportunity. Because they are a native speaker, they are automatically the best possible source for authentic spoken English. They will naturally use high-frequency phrases, idioms, slang and grammar.

If, during a conversation with a native speaker, you spend most of the time speaking — you have missed a great opportunity. When you speak to a native speaker, how exactly are you learning? You might get a little practice, but you will not learn anything new.

On the other hand, as you listen to a native speaker you get a wealth of learning. You'll hear true native pronunciation. You'll learn natural phrases. You'll learn new words. You'll learn idioms and slang. In fact, most of the benefit of having English conversations happens when you are listening.

This is good news, because most people love to talk. You don't need to feel stressed about talking with a native speaker because it's very easy. All you have to do is ask them a lot of questions. Ask them about their life. Ask about their job or school. Ask about their family. Ask about their hobbies and interests. Ask about their past experiences.

Then listen. Listen carefully. As they speak, look at their eyes and the rest of their face. Seek to understand as well as possible. If you don't understand something, ask more questions for clarification.

When your goal is to listen rather than talk, you'll learn more English and you will also be a better friend. Everybody loves a good listener! The added benefit to you is that you can relax. You don't need to feel pressured to speak. With a few simple questions you will have all the conversations you want.

Mini Story Retells

We have discussed natural conversation situations and how to approach them. In this last section, I'll teach you how to practice speaking and improve your pronunciation. Though you'll always spend the vast majority of your time listening, advanced learners can also benefit from a little bit of speaking practice daily.

Speaking practice is only recommended for advanced learners who are already

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speaking effortlessly. At that point, you are ready to work on your pronunciation and speed.

One of the easiest ways to practice speaking is to do mini story retells. As the name suggests, you will use the same mini stories described in Rule Seven: listen and answer mini stories. You will continue listening to the stories daily. You'll continue shouting your answers to the questions.

Then you will add this next step. After you finish listening to the story, turn off the audio. Stand in front of a mirror. Get yourself into a peak emotional state — jump, shout, smile. Get energized!

When feeling great, retell the mini story you just heard. Do not try to tell the story exactly, word for word. Do not try to memorize it word for word. Rather, as quickly as possible, retell the story using your own words. You can even change the story if you want.

The most important point is to do this quickly. Strive for speed! In a loud and energetic voice, tell the story to yourself in the mirror. This will only take you a few minutes. When you finish, take a short break and then repeat the process again. Try to retell the story even faster the next time.

The purpose of fast retells is to bypass your logical (and slow) left brain. By speaking quickly, you are forced to speak more naturally and more intuitively. As you do this daily, your fluency will increase. You'll speak faster without effort. English will flow out of you more and more easily. At this point, you are ready for the final step: pronunciation.

Pronunciation Retells

Earlier in the book, I described the movie technique and taught you a method for using it to improve pronunciation. You can use a similar technique with mini story retells.

First, repeat the steps in the previous section. Do a few fast retells of the story. When you can do that easily, it's time to work on pronunciation.

Play one sentence from the mini story and then pause the audio. As you play this sentence, listen very closely. Focus especially on the rhythm and intonation. Notice when the speaker pauses. Notice when the speaker's voice goes up and when it goes down. Notice when it gets louder and when it gets softer.

Then say the same sentence and copy the speaker's voice exactly. Again, imagine you are an actor trying to exactly imitate this speaker. Use their voice. Use their emotion. Even use your face and body as you imagine the speaker would. Try to become this person as you speak.

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Then play the next sentence and pause, repeating the process. In this way, go through the entire mini story. Be sure to mimic both the questions and the answers.

Of course, it’s best to choose a speaker that you like!

Using the methods in this chapter, you will take your speaking to an advanced, near-native level.

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CHAPTER 20

English Is The Language Of International Business

A few years ago I was reviewing business proposals. Our company needed new graphics for our website, so I had posted a job on an international freelancer forum. We got over twenty responses to our job posting. Each posting contained a bid for our project.

As I reviewed the bids, I noticed the nationalities of the graphic artists. There was a company from Argentina. There was an artist from Hungary. There was a Japanese bidder. There was a German and a Malaysian. There were several from the United States and Canada.

As I looked them over, I was struck by this clear example of globalization. These people were all participating in an online international marketplace. Then I realized the obvious: they were all using English to do so. Every bid was written in English. Therefore, each of these artists was competing not only based on their artistic ability, but also on their ability to communicate their strengths in English.

Clearly, English is the international language of business. It is for this reason that schools, everywhere in the world, offer English classes. English language ability is a competitive advantage to any and all who have it. English opens the world, to companies and freelance artists alike. Lack of English closes opportunities and puts you at a disadvantage in our global economy.

These are simply the facts, be they pleasant to you or not. The simple truth is that English is growing increasingly important to the global economy. More and more jobs, in more and more countries, are requiring spoken English proficiency. Some companies, such as the Japanese company Rakuten, are making English their official language.

Rakuten’s founder and CEO Hiroshi Mikitani created an English-only policy for the web commerce company. Mr. Mikitani said “one of the things holding back Japanese firms from competing globally is a language barrier that prevents them from fully grasping overseas competition.” He also said that lack of English proficiency limits Japanese companies from pursuing global talent and retaining non-Japanese staff.

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With the new policy, all employees are required to use English for company communications, including meetings, presentations, emails, proposals, and other documents. The company expects employees to be proactive about learning English independently.

While this is a developing trend for Japan, many international companies are increasing their requirements for English. Many, like Rakuten, are instituting English-only policies. As this trend grows, the demand for business English grows with it.

Increasingly, in the business world there is simply no escape from English.

It's Still English

Business English opens economic opportunities. Because of this, a large variety of business English classes, schools, textbooks and lessons have arrived to fill the need. Not surprisingly, most of these use the same old methods to teach business English as they used to teach general English.

Business English, however, is not a separate type of English. The happy truth is that most of the English used in business situations is the same English used commonly in other situations. In business, you'll find the same common vocabulary, the same common idioms, and the same grammar.

The main addition to business English is simply vocabulary related to specific business topics. This vocabulary falls into two categories: general business terms and specialized jargon.

General business terms are those used throughout the business world. These are common phrases often used in meetings, proposals, and presentations. These are quite easy to learn, using the same Effortless English™ methods you are already using.

The Easy Way To Learn Business English

Learning business English is simply a matter of selecting real materials that are related to business topics. In other words, you use the exact same Effortless English™ method.

First you focus on fuel, your psychology. You change your limiting beliefs. You put yourself into a peak emotional state. Then you use the seven Rules. You spend most of your time listening. You learn deeply. You avoid grammar books and textbooks. You listen to mini stories and point of view stories — choosing stories about business topics that use business English vocabulary.

For extra listening, listen to real business English materials such as business

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podcasts, business newscasts, and business audiobooks. When possible, get both the text and audio versions. Read and listen simultaneously.

Just as you did with general English, choose materials that are interesting to you. If you are a salesperson, choose materials related to sales. If your area is finance, then focus on audios and text related to finance.

You have nothing special to do. Just follow the same Effortless English™ system, using business materials.

Learn Specialized Jargon Last

Some fields of business have a large number of specialized words. This specialized vocabulary is called "jargon." For example, accountants have a large number of accounting terms which are used extensively in their jobs. This specialized vocabulary is vital for accountants.

While necessary, jargon is the final type of business English you will learn. Before learning jargon you should first focus on general business English. Master the most common business phrases by listening to and reading real business content. Only after you have done this should you concern yourself with jargon.

Of course, you'll learn your field's jargon in exactly the same way as you learned general business English. When you are ready, simply change the material you are listening to and reading. Gather real materials that are specifically related to your field.

Choose material that is useful. Rather than focusing on the English, focus on learning more about your field from English sources. Develop your knowledge and skills using these sources and you'll automatically improve your business English at the same time.

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CHAPTER 21

How To Give Powerful English Presentations

I was standing at the side of a stage, waiting to give my first public speech to a group of thirty people. My heart was beating quickly. My breathing was tight and shallow. My entire body felt jittery. I looked down at my hands and they were shaking. I tried to control the shaking, but failed. I thought to myself, “What if I forget everything and freeze?”

Suddenly, I heard my name as I was introduced to the audience. I walked onto the stage. The audience applauded but I couldn’t hear them. I glanced up and viewed them through tunnel vision. My sight was narrowed and my peripheral vision had turned black.

As I started to speak, I felt my throat tighten. My voice sounded strange — high pitched and weak. I fixed my gaze on the wall at the back of the room and rapidly gave my presentation. My only goal was to finish as fast as possible and get off that stage. Though the speech was only three minutes long, it felt like hours.

When I finished, I rushed quickly off the stage and sat down. My hands were still shaking uncontrollably.

Few activities are as terrifying as public speaking. Speeches are continually ranked as one of the most feared and stressful life experiences — dreaded by nearly all people. This nerve-wracking experience is made even more difficult when English is not your native language.

When you feel fear, you have both a mental and a physical reaction. It is the physical reactions that are particularly difficult to handle. When terrified, your body produces an adrenaline response. The adrenal glands release adrenaline into your blood, preparing you for “fight or flight.”

The physical responses to adrenaline are fairly consistent and predictable and include sweating, increased heartbeat, shallow rapid breathing, muscle tension, shaking, upset stomach, tunnel vision, and loss of fine muscle control.

Adrenaline produces mental changes as well. Your sense of time changes. Most people experience a “slowing down” of time while some experience “time speeding up.” Worst of all for speakers, adrenaline causes your higher brain activities to slow. Brain activity shifts to the more primitive and emotional sections of the brain. This is why you can speak perfectly well to one person but struggle terribly when

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speaking in front of a group. Your brain is not working as well.

Clearly the great challenge with public speaking is overcoming these fear reactions.

Psychology Is Eighty Percent Of Success

I could hear the crowd of three thousand in the room next door. Loud rock music echoed through the venue. A buzz of energy grew as the event organizer began my introduction.

Backstage, my excitement built. I jumped, shouted and smiled. I yelled to myself, "I am here to contribute! I will give all my energy and ability to help this audience today! I'm ready to rock! Yes! Yes! Yes!"

I walked to the door and peeked through it to view the audience. They were standing on their feet, applauding. And then they began to chant my name. "A.J. Hoge! A.J. Hoge! A.J. Hoge!" A surge of energy went through my body. I jumped and then ran onto the stage. The audience continued to shout my name.

As I stood facing that audience of three thousand people, I felt no fear. My breathing was deep, my body relaxed. In place of fear, I felt tremendous enthusiasm. In place of nervousness, I felt eagerness instead.

My experience of public speaking has totally transformed. Before a big speech, I now feel powerful — an incredible mix of confidence, excitement, and enthusiasm.

How did I make such a dramatic change? I did it using a few simple techniques, practiced hundreds of times.

The good news is that you can do what I have done. No matter how much fear you have for English presentations, by practicing a simple technique you can train yourself to feel strong and confident every time you give a public speech.

Feeling strong and confident is eighty percent or more of public speaking success. You already know how to speak. Once you overcome the fear of public speaking, you won't have any problem making great English presentations.

Confidence Must Be Trained

Confidence does not just happen accidentally. To overcome the fear of public speaking, you must develop emotional mastery at a very high level. Doing that requires practice and training. Great speakers train constantly.

You will use a very basic technique to achieve the emotional mastery necessary for public speaking. This technique is designed to overcome the natural fear response and replace it with feelings of confidence.

For this technique to be successful, you must practice it many times before giving

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a speech. Ideally, you will repeat this technique hundreds of times before taking the stage. You'll do this before each and every speech you ever make.

You Can't Suppress Fear, You Can Only Transform It

The adrenaline response is powerful. Once it is triggered, it is almost impossible to suppress. You can't fight it. In fact, any attempt to suppress the fear will make it worse.

For example, if your hands begin to shake before giving a speech, it is nearly impossible to stop them. The same is true for a rapid heartbeat, shallow breathing, muscle tension, etc. Once these reactions have started, they can't be fought. The adrenaline is already in your blood and your body will respond. If you try to fight against the reactions, you'll grow frustrated by your inability to change them. Your fear will multiply as you realize you are not in control, and the symptoms will worsen.

Once the adrenaline response is triggered, you have only one choice — channel the energy into something positive. Remember the purpose of adrenaline — it prepares you for flight or fight. This means you can use the same fear/flight reactions to create courage and fighting spirit instead. This is how I transformed my own fear of public speaking.

By using the energy instead of resisting it, you make yourself into a dynamic and confident speaker. The physical responses of fear and excitement are nearly identical. When you are excited your heartbeat increases, your breathing gets faster, and your muscles tension increases. When extremely excited, you may sweat and your hands may shake. In other words, your body reacts the same. So what makes the difference between extreme fear and extreme excitement?

It is the thoughts and feelings you attach to the physical reactions that determine whether you experience fear or excitement. By connecting positive experiences to the physical sensations, you will train yourself to feel excited and powerful rather than afraid.

How To Convert Fear Into Power

We will once again return to the technique of anchoring to program your brain for public-speaking confidence.

The first step is to recreate, as best you can, the physical sensations of fear. You want to get your heart beating faster. You want to increase your breathing. You want to tighten your muscles. The easiest way to do this is to use the peak state exercise you learned in the beginning of this book.

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Put on your favorite loud, high-energy music. As you listen to this music, begin to jump and move your body. Little by little, jump higher and jump faster. Put a huge smile on your face. Make strong powerful gestures with your arms. Shout aloud, “Yes! Yes! Yes!” Keep going until your heart is beating fast and you are breathing heavily.

Turn off the music and, while still breathing heavily, begin to talk about your topic. Talk about the main ideas. If you have already planned the speech, do the whole thing. As you talk, move your body. Walk from one point of the room to another. Use strong gestures to make your point. Continue to smile.

At first this will likely be difficult, as you’ll be out of breath. Your heart will be beating fast and it may be difficult to think of your speech. It’s okay. Continue smiling and do the best you can. When you finish, turn on the music again and repeat the entire process.

Repeat this exercise at least four times a day. Each day, try to get your heart beating even faster before you practice your speech.

This exercise accomplishes several things. First, you create a positive anchor. By playing music you love and jumping and having fun, you generate strong positive emotions. Feeling great, you then begin your speech. With repetition, these great feelings become connected to the act of giving a speech. Eventually, just thinking about doing a presentation will make you feel excited automatically.

This exercise also trains you to deal with the major symptoms of nervousness: fast heartbeat, fast breathing, sweating, etc. Most people practice a speech when they are feeling calm. Because they always practice in a calm emotional state, they are unready for the flood of emotions that come just before the real speech. By practicing with an elevated heart and breathing rate, you are training your mind to expect these reactions and handle them. On the day of the speech, you won’t get scared by these symptoms because they’ll be normal and familiar to you. Instead, you’ll be used to channeling this physical energy into positive emotions and strong actions.

This is the difference between training and practicing. Those who practice simply review their speech. Those who train do their best to recreate the emotional and physical conditions that will occur during the real speech. By training, you prepare yourself fully and will be ready for anything.

Practice Emotional Mastery Techniques Daily

Peak state training takes time. It’s not enough to do this just a few times. Ideally, you will do this training hundreds of times prior to every speech you ever give.

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Preparation and training are what make you a great speaker.

You simply must practice daily in order to improve and master the fear of public speaking. It’s not easy, but it is highly rewarding. Public speaking mastery will open many opportunities. When you speak to an audience, you are able to reach tens, hundreds, or even thousands of people at a time. Your influence grows. As your influence grows, so too will your career.

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CHAPTER 22

English Connects You With The World

Think about why you are studying English. Chances are it has something to do with communicating or connecting with other people. English conversation is about connection. That is the purpose of English conversation – to connect with people around the world. We want to connect personally and emotionally. We want to connect with business partners, clients, and customers. We want to connect with professional peers. We want to connect with new friends.

In short, you need a community to use English. As a learner, it's especially useful to join a community of other English learners in order to practice and improve. The kind of community you join, however, is very important.

Your peer group has a strong effect upon your ultimate success. A "peer group" is simply a group of people who are interconnected with each other. Your friends are a peer group. Your family is another peer group. If you join an English class in a school, your classmates become your peer group. When you join an online community of English learners, they become your peer group.

Peer groups influence their members because, as a group, they share and promote certain values and behaviors. The group as a whole has certain standards and every member of the group is pulled towards those standards. This group effect can produce powerful positive or negative results.

A negative peer group is one with generally low standards. These groups are typically characterized by frequent criticism, focus on errors, complaints, and even insults among members. Such a group tends to pull down its members, discouraging and distracting them from success. Sadly, such groups are especially common in schools and online – the two most common English learning environments.

You want a peer group to pull you up. You want to join a group that encourages you, that feeds you positive thoughts, that interests and entertains you. You want a group that will boost you when you are struggling, and celebrate when you are successful.

Peer groups create spirals, either upward or downward. Through their shared interactions, standards and values, peer group communities exert ever-increasing influence upon you. Participation in a toxic peer group will eventually erode your

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confidence, no matter how strong you are. On the positive side, an inspiring peer group will empower you to improve, grow, and achieve tremendous success, even if you now feel hopeless.

Choose carefully. When considering a class or online English community, research it thoroughly. Notice how the members interact with each other. When a member is successful, are they celebrated, or do other members gossip jealously? When a community member struggles, do other members jump in to encourage and help them or are they ignored?

While it seems obvious, many students forget the ultimate reason they are learning. In traditional English conversation classes it's easy to get too focused on tests, textbooks, grades, and "levels." After a while, you as a student are so worried about these artificial measurements that you forget your ultimate purpose for study.

At the deepest level, English conversation is about international community-building and sustaining meaningful connections between people. What kind of people do you want in your English speaking community?

One of my ongoing goals is to use our seminars and courses and online groups as a way to create strong international communities. I want to help people connect and communicate in positive and meaningful ways – and help them stay connected. One way you can do this is through our member forums and conversation clubs. They're designed to allow you to interact and ask questions of other students who are learning English just like you.

I also want you to always keep in mind why you are studying English in the first place. Forget grades, tests and worrying about mistakes or how you might sound to others. Just focus on communicating and trying to connect with positive people. Surround yourself with enthusiastic people who love speaking English.

The more you connect with people who are excited about English, the more excited you will become. Enthusiasm is contagious! So is negativity. Choose your peer group wisely.

COMMUNITY IS IMPORTANT

When learning anything, especially when learning English, it's important to have a community – a club of othe enthusiastic learners. This is why people continue to go to schools, even though they know the schools' method are terrible. People want a community. They want to join with other people. They want the increased motivatio

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support, and inspiration that a good community can provide.

This is why our website is called the Effortless English Club™ (EffortlessEnglishClub.com). Effortles English™ is more than great courses – it's also a community of very positive and enthusiastic learners. In fact, w are very careful about membership in our community. We only accept the most motivated – English learners wh are very positive and enthusiastic.

We monitor our club quite closely, and we have zero tolerance for the negative, insulting, or childish behavic usually seen in internet communities. On most internet forums, for example, you find a massive amount of insult and arguing. We don't allow that. Such members are quickly and decisively eliminated from the club, and ar never allowed to re-join.

Yes, this is a tough policy. But it is necessary. It can be difficult to create a great international learning clu online. And I admit – I am not interested in accepting and tolerating everyone. My goal is to create a international English learning club of only the most positive learners. I want the most enthusiastic, the mos supportive, the friendliest, the most energetic members in the world… and that, in fact, is exactly what we have.

The members of the Effortless English Club™ are absolutely amazing. The level of enthusiasm an friendliness is tremendous. New members are always very happy to discover such a fun and supportive learnin club. We have many super members who will answer your questions, give you learning advice, encourage yo when you feel discouraged, and inspire you with their success.

We made that community even stronger when we launched our new VIP Program. For us, VIP stands fo Vision, Inspiration, Persistence… a monthly membership site where the most dedicated members meet… and ge new lessons from me every month. All lessons have video, audio and text, so you can understand everything… but more importantly, the lessons focus on three powerful topics: Advanced Learning Strategies, The Psycholog of Success, and Positive Leadership.

The VIP Member Program focuses not only on English, but also on Learning and Success in general. This is place where our most motivated students (the top 1 percent) meet and learn together – a powerful club an community of the Best of the Best. They are the best not because of their starting English ability, but because o their positive attitudes, persistence, and devotion to learning.

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CHAPTER 23

The Effortless English Code and Mission

The Effortless English™ community is held together by our purpose, code, mission and values. Obviously, our main purpose is to help you speak English powerfully and correctly. We share, however, a deeper code, mission and values.

It is the code, mission and values that have created our positive and enthusiastic community, with members from every continent of all ages, genders, and types of people. The code of Effortless English™ is our simple, three part code of conduct. All members of our community, upon joining, agree to follow the code.

The Code of the Effortless English Club™ is:

1. We Do The Best We Can
2. We Do The Right Thing
3. We Show Each Other We Care

We do the best we can means that we try hard to improve but we know that perfection is impossible. We don't worry about perfection. We don't get upset about mistakes. Our focus is always on improvement, not "the one right answer."

We do the right thing means we do not lie, gossip, or insult other members. We treat each other as good friends and family members. We follow "the Golden Rule" by being kind and polite within our community.

We show each other we care means we go beyond just avoiding negative behavior. Rather, we actively encourage and support other members. When another member is feeling bad, we encourage them. When another member succeeds, we cheer them, congratulate them, and compliment them sincerely. We are always looking for ways to help each other.

In addition to mastering spoken English, our community shares a deeper mission. Our mission is:

To explore new opportunities for growth,

To bring confidence, vitality and happiness to people all over the world,

To boldly go where we have never gone before.

To explore new opportunities for growth means we are always looking for new ways to learn and improve. We are dedicated to lifelong learning. As we improve, we share our success with other people. We help others to feel stronger, more energetic and happier. We do this within the Effortless English Club™. We do this

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within our families. We do this anywhere we can. Finally, we strive to live boldly with open minds. We are eager to try new things, consider new ideas, and travel to new places. We have an adventurous attitude toward life.

The mission is connected to our community values. We have seven values:

1. Devotion to the Mission

As members of the Effortless English™ community we all share the mission. The mission is something we do together, as a team, as an international family.

2. Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm is vital for success in any area of life. Enthusiasm generates peak emotion and fuels our learning engine. We consciously choose to develop our enthusiasm for learning and life.

3. Constant and Never-Ending Improvement

As our mission suggests, we are dedicated to constant and never-ending improvement. We know that big success is the result of small but consistent improvements. We know that learning makes life more interesting and enjoyable and we continue learning as long as we are alive.

4. Contribution

Personal success is important and so is sharing that success. As we improve, we focus on helping others do the same. We are delighted by the success of others in our community. We do our best to help others in whatever way we can.

5. Self-Reliance

Members of the Effortless English Club™ are independent learners. We do not wait for teachers, schools or experts to tell us what to do. We don't wait for others to solve our problems. We take responsibility for our own lives and our own problems. We are proactive learners.

6. Persistence

Success is impossible without persistence. When something is important to us, we do not quit. Despite hardships, despite challenges, despite temporary failures, we keep going. We continue to move forward until we achieve our goals.

7. Positive Leadership

Every member of the Effortless English Club™ is a leader because each of us can encourage and inspire others. In our community, we lead by example. We don't tell others what to do. Rather, we strive to be good role models. We work hard to show the way. As leaders, we want to make others stronger, more successful, and more confident.

It is my belief that all schools should operate with such a code, mission and values. Many of the problems in education would be solved if teachers,

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administrators, and students were guided by the above principles.

One of the great problems in schools is that teachers have failed to recognize they must do more than lecture to and discipline their students. Truly great teachers are more than just lecturers, they are leaders and coaches who inspire their students to greatness.

Think of your favorite sports coach – someone who helped his or her team achieve greatness. These people do not simply teach the skills of the game. Great coaches lead and inspire. They are experts in practical psychology. They know how to energize and motivate their players. They make their teams stronger, more confident, and more successful.

This is why I typically call myself an English “coach” rather than a teacher. The word “coach” reminds me to be more. It reminds me to focus on energizing, leading and inspiring my team members. As a coach, I must do more than simply teach English, I must help you believe in yourself. I must convince you that you can succeed with English, that, in fact, you will succeed.

I hope this book has done exactly that. I hope you feel more confident. I hope you are convinced that you can and you will finally succeed with English speaking. The past does not equal the future. Whatever struggles you have had with English are gone. Let them go. Today is a new day and you now have a completely new system.

Today is your day. You are now on your way to Effortless English™ speaking.

Enjoy the journey!

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About The Author

A.J. Hoge is the founder and director of Effortless English LLC, and co-founder of Learn Real English and Business English Conversations. He has been described as “the world’s #1 English teacher” and is famous as the host of The Effortless English Show, with over 41,000,000 downloads worldwide. He has a master’s degree in TESOL and has been teaching English since 1996. A.J. teaches seminars around the world on the topics of English, public speaking, effective training methods, career development, and online marketing.

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As a service to English learners I have recorded an audio version of this book. Get the audio version on this book's website. Use the audio and the text version of the book chapter by chapter. Learn deeply by first reading and listening to a chapter at

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the same time. Do this for a few days. Then put aside the text and just listen to the audio chapter for a few days. Once you have mastered a chapter, begin the process again with the next chapter. Get the Audiobook at: EffortlessEnglish.com

2. Effortless English Courses
Improve your English faster by training with A.J. in one of the official Effortless English™ courses. Train to be a skillful and confident English speaker. Every course is designed using the methods described in this book. When you join an Effortless English™ course you'll improve your spoken English using audio and video lessons taught by A.J. himself. This is the easiest way to use the Effortless English™ system for the fastest possible success. Join an Effortless English™ course today at: EffortlessEnglishClub.com

3. AJ Hoge Speaking & Training
A.J. prepares your people to thrive in the global economy using English fluency as a stepping stone. A.J. consults to international companies on 4 continents, speaking at corporate seminars and public venues in the U.S., Asia, Europe, and South America. A.J. speaks on topics related to English, teaching and training, public speaking, career development and international marketing. He will customize his presentation to meet your organization's needs. Learn more about A.J.'s speaking, training, and consulting at: AJHoge.com

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Learn real English, including idioms, slang, and casual English. Learn the English that's used "on the street" by native speakers. All courses use real natural conversations between native speakers. Each course is taught by the Learn Real English™ team of A.J., Kristin Dodds, and Joe Weiss. Join a Learn Real English course at: LearnRealEnglish.com

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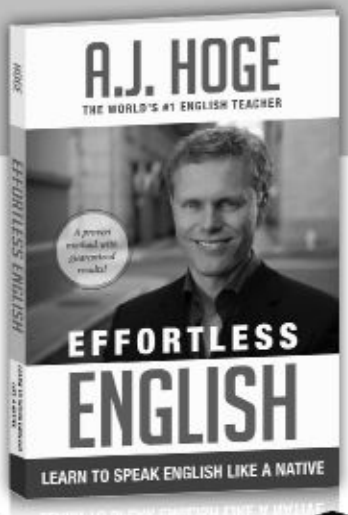

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Use the audio and text version of the book chapter by chapter. Learn deeply by first reading and listening to a chapter at the same time. Do this for a few days. Then put aside the text and just listen to the audio chapter for a few days. Once you have mastered the chapter, begin the process again with the next chapter.

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AJ HOGE
SPEAKING & TRAINING

AJ prepares people to thrive in the global economy using English fluency as a stepping stone. AJ consults to international companies on 4 continents, speaks at corporate seminars and public venues in the U.S., Asia, Europe, and South America.

AJ speaks on topics related to English, teaching and training, public speaking, career development, and online marketing. He will customize his presentation to meet your organization's needs.

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