

# Effective Methods of Learning English

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**Abstract:** You want to learn English but aren't sure where to begin, or (and this is far more likely) you've tried to learn English and are frustrated by your lack of progress. You're not alone! Millions of people are learning English all over the world. Here you'll find key strategies to learn English faster, tips on choosing the course that works best for you, common mistakes to avoid, and links to our complete collection of English learning resources. Learning English is a good way to improve your professional future and expand your horizons. More and more people around the world use English as a way to connect with people from different cultural backgrounds. The English language has become the lingua franca of international communication, trade, business, diplomacy, and many other areas. Mastering the language will open doors for you, both expected and unexpected.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Based on the findings of the EF English Proficiency Index (EPI), which ranks countries and regions by their English skills, over 1 billion individuals use English as either their first or second language and hundreds of millions speak it as a third or fourth language. Proficiency in English facilitates the exchange of information among scientists, researchers, tourists, and business professionals. On an individual basis, those who are fluent in English have higher job prospects, greater earning potential, and increased access to the wealth of information online.

If you're still not convinced of the benefits of learning English, here are a few more:

Learning English will build up your confidence. Mastering something you've struggled with for years is extremely satisfying.

Learning English boosts your career by allowing you to follow the latest trends in your field, attend conferences, and evolve into positions with an international remit.

Learning a new language keeps your mind healthy, stimulating your memory and increasing mental flexibility.

Learning English gives you access to more of the world's knowledge, and from a wider variety of perspectives. Over half of the material online is in English, and all the world's top scientific journals are published in that language.

Learning English makes international travel easier and more fulfilling. You'll be less dependent on guides and translators, able to explore the world on your own.

## 2 THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Learning English allows you to meet people from other places and expand your cultural understanding. The world is more interconnected than ever before.

Successful strategies for learning English effectively include:

1. Immersion: Surround yourself with the language as much as possible. Watch English movies,

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listen to English music, and try to engage in conversations with native speakers.

2. Practice regularly: Consistent practice is key to improving your English skills. Set aside dedicated time each day to study and practice reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

3. Use a variety of resources: Utilize textbooks, online courses, language learning apps, and interactive websites to engage with different learning materials. This will keep you motivated and expose you to various aspects of the language.

4. Develop strong reading skills: Read English books, newspapers, articles, and blogs to improve your vocabulary, comprehension, and grammar. Start with simpler texts and gradually work your way up to more complex materials.

5. Speak and listen actively: Find opportunities to speak in English, whether through language exchange programs, conversation groups, or online platforms. Actively listen to native speakers in podcasts, videos, and audio recordings to improve your pronunciation and understanding.

6. Focus on grammar: While it's important to practice speaking and listening, don't overlook the importance of grammar. Dedicate time to studying grammar rules and practice using them in sentences.

7. Take advantage of technology: Use language learning apps, online resources, and language exchange platforms to practice with interactive exercises, receive instant feedback, and connect with other English learners.

8. Set specific goals: Define what you want to achieve with your English learning, whether it's passing a specific exam, improving your workplace communication, or enhancing your travel experiences. Setting goals will give you direction and motivation.

9. Seek feedback and correction: Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Embrace opportunities to receive feedback from teachers, language partners, or native speakers, as this will help you identify areas for improvement.

10. Be patient and persistent: Learning a language takes time and effort. Don't get discouraged by setbacks or slow progress. Stay motivated, practice regularly, and celebrate your achievements along the way.

The secret to learning English quickly isn't much of a secret: increase your exposure to the language. Ideally, you should be surrounded by English 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. That's why going abroad is such an effective way to learn a language. But if travel isn't an option, you can still create an English immersion environment at home. Do it by reading in

English, listening to English podcasts, watching TV in English, speaking to people in English at work, making English-speaking friends online, etc. At first, this sounds daunting. But you can do it if you take it one step at a time.

According to academic research, linguists have demonstrated that there is not one single best method for everyone in all contexts, and that no one teaching method is inherently superior to the others.

Also, it is not always possible – or appropriate – to apply the same methodology to all learners, who have different objectives, environments and learning needs.

A proficient language instructor always follows the Principled Eclecticism approach, carefully selecting techniques and methodologies that align with the learner's specific goals, learning style, and context.

English teaching methods have undergone significant advancements, particularly in the past four decades. Whether you are a language learner, training manager, or teacher, it is crucial to familiarize yourself with the diverse methods and techniques available. This knowledge will enable you to make informed decisions, navigate the language learning market, and enhance your overall language learning experience.

Each teaching method is based on a particular vision of understanding the language or the learning process, often using specific techniques and materials used in a set sequence.

The main methodologies are listed below in the chronological order of their development:

Grammar Translation – the classical method

Direct Method – discovering the importance of speaking.

Audio-lingualise – the first modern methodology

Humanistic Approaches – a range of holistic methods applied to language learning.

Communicative Language Teaching – the modern standard method.

Principled Eclecticism – fitting the method to the learner, not the learner to the method.

Each method has a different focus or priority, so let's look at what this means in practical terms in the classroom.

The more common methods have a link to a separate page with more details and an explanation of how they work, including the most common method currently used – Communicative Language Teaching.

Table 1: Highlighting the Method, Focus and Characteristics

Method	Focus	Characteristics
<u>Grammar Translation</u>	Written literary texts	Translate from English into your native language
<u>Direct Method</u> (also called Natural Method)	Everyday spoken language	Student learns by associating meaning directly in English
<u>Audio-Lingual Method</u>	Sentence and sound patterns	Listening and speaking drills and pattern practice only in English
Cognitive Code Approach	Grammar rules	English grammar rules deduced and then understood in context
<u>Humanistic Approaches</u> – 4 popular examples:		
– The Silent Way	Student interaction rather than teacher	Teacher is silent to allow student awareness of how English works
– Suggestopedia	Meaningful texts and vocabulary	Relaxed atmosphere, with music; encourages subliminal learning of English
– Community Language Learning	Student interaction	Understanding of English through active student interaction
– Comprehension Approach (Natural Approach, the Learnables, and Total Physical Response)	Listening comprehension	English speaking delayed until students are ready; meaning clarified through actions and visuals
<u>Communicative Language Teaching</u>	Interaction, authentic communication and negotiating meaning	Understanding of English through active student interaction; role play, games, information gaps
Content-based, Task-based, and Participatory Approaches	What is being communicated, not structure of English	Content based on relevance to students' lives: topics, tasks, problem-solving
Learning Strategy Training, Cooperative Learning, and Multiple Intelligences	How to learn	Teach learning strategies, cooperation; activities vary according to different intelligences

Teaching styles have changed significantly over the years. The traditional way that education was delivered was through recitation and memorisation techniques, whereas the modern way of doing things involves interactive methods.

The traditional approach to education, also referred to as conventional education, emphasizes a back-to-basics method that is still prevalent in schools today. This method involves recitation, where students would take turns reciting the lesson while others listened in silence. Students were expected to study and memorize the assigned material. At the end of the module, a written test or oral examination, known as an Assignment Study Recitation Test, would be administered.

Traditional teaching approaches focused on rewarding students for their efforts, using class time efficiently, and implementing clear rules to manage student behaviour. These methods were rooted in established customs that had proven successful in schools for many years. Teachers were responsible for imparting knowledge and maintaining behavioural standards.

Progressive and modern approaches to education have brought about significant changes in teaching methods. These practices prioritize the individual needs of students rather than assuming a uniform level of understanding for all. The modern style of teaching revolves around engaging students in activities and utilizing techniques such as questioning, explaining, demonstrating, and collaboration.

One contemporary method is known as spaced learning, where students are encouraged to switch between different activities in rapid succession. For example, providing a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation on a subject followed by a 15-minute sports session. The goal of spaced learning is to improve academic performance, and it has been proven effective. It is believed that this approach, which deviates from traditional methods that involve four hours of continuous teaching, helps the brain establish connections necessary for retaining knowledge. Additionally, it contributes to a more relaxed learning environment.

Sonia Jackson, who authored an insightful blog post on modern teaching methods for *Getting Smart*, argues that the traditional approach of "chalk and talk" that has persisted for centuries now yields inferior results compared to the innovative and contemporary teaching methods available today. These newer approaches place a strong emphasis on fostering greater student interaction, breaking down barriers of authority, and prioritizing enjoyment of

the learning process over simply achieving high grades.

Due to the reliance on repetition and rote memorization, traditional teaching methods often limited students' development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. On the other hand, modern education promotes collaboration among students, leading to increased productivity. However, it is important to note that both traditional and modern teaching methods hold value and effectiveness in the contemporary educational landscape. Sarah Wright, a blogger for TES, highlights the significance of finding a balance between the two approaches, understanding when the traditional methods are most suitable and recognizing appropriate times to explore new and innovative techniques.

In the modern era, there is a need for a fresh and innovative approach to teaching foreign languages. The primary objective of today's education system is to awaken a child's desire to learn, excel in new knowledge and activities, and actively shape their own educational path. Students are encouraged to independently explore, discover, and analyse materials, while the teacher's role is to guide them effectively. The teacher must skilfully structure lessons in a logical manner that sparks students' interest in learning English. The traditional method of memorizing words and practicing grammar has proven to be ineffective. The search for new teaching methods stems from the lack of motivation among students to learn English. Often, students face difficulties in learning a foreign language and struggle to grasp the material due to psychological factors. It has been observed that incorporating various modern resources and approaches not only piques students' interest but also enhances their motivation to study.

Teaching methods are the process of interaction between the teacher and students, as a result of which there is a transfer and assimilation of knowledge, skills and abilities provided by the content of training - Skehan [1996].

The teaching method is a complex and interconnected system that encompasses various characteristics essential for its classification. By combining different forms of work and techniques, it allows for creative organization of lessons, sparking students' interest in the subject. Teaching communication skills and mastering speech are important goals of modern techniques. Furthermore, each method in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has unique features resulting from the combination of approaches, methods, and

techniques. Some methods are more popular and widely utilized than others, and new methods are continuously being developed. As a result, university teachers can choose the most suitable method for their work. In academic lyceums, task-based and project-based methods are commonly employed for communicative purposes when teaching foreign languages.

An important advantage of the method is that it has a variety of tasks: role-plays, discussions, debates, etc. According to Willis [1996], there are six types of tasks:

- Listing tasks: For example, students might have to make up a list of things they would pack if they were going on a beach vacation.
- Sorting and ordering: Students work in pairs and make up a list of the most important characteristics of an ideal vacation.
- Comparing: Students compare ads for two different supermarkets.
- Problem-solving: Students read a letter to an advice columnist and suggest a solution to the writer's problems.
- Sharing personal experience: Students discuss their reactions to an ethical or moral dilemma.
- Creative tasks: Students prepare plans for redecorating a house.

### 3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the objective of these approaches and methods is to achieve proficiency in spoken language and develop effective communication skills. Through the use of communicative methods in teaching, students become more engaged and active participants. In this case, the teacher's role is to effectively involve every student in classroom discussions. The essence of this method lies in creating authentic communication scenarios. By engaging in dialogues, students have the opportunity to apply their acquired knowledge in practical situations.

In a communicative approach, the primary objective is for students to effectively learn and apply a spoken language for communication purposes. The teacher's role shifts to that of a task setter, while the students' active participation becomes the main focus. The teacher's task is to encourage everyone in the class to engage in conversations. This approach emphasizes creating authentic communication scenarios where students can put their acquired knowledge into practice. During communicative

tasks, students take on a more active role, often leaving their seats to complete assignments. This increased responsibility fosters confidence in using the target language more proficiently. Teachers in communicative classrooms speak less and listen more, taking on the role of active facilitators in their students' learning process.

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