



If you have a clear plan when you study, it will help to keep you motivated, focused and moving forward. Maybe you need English for your job, studies or for travelling? Having clear ideas and goals helps to keep you focused on the topics you will be learning.

TIPS FOR PLANNING:

1. What are your reasons for learning English? How will you use it? At home/social/work/studies/travel?
2. Create clear goals for your studies.
 - ✓ S.M.A.R.T. (Specific. Measurable. Achievable. Realistic. Time bound)
 - ✓ have short (weeks/months) and long (a year or more) term goals linked to number 1. Have a small number of goals linked to your course and number 2.
 - ✓ reward yourself when you complete a goal. Celebrate what is working.
 - ✓ add the goals to your diary with alerts as reminders.
 - ✓ update your goals as you progress – too hard? too easy?
3. Have people to support you such as family, friends, colleagues or fellow students.
4. Create networks with other learners and students to practice and discuss what you are learning.

ASSESSMENT AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

There will be an assessment before you start your course to ascertain your English level and assign you to the right course. Carry out your own regular assessments too.

HOW WOULD YOU GRADE YOUR ENGLISH SKILLS OUT OF 10?

GRAMMAR TENSES - what range of grammar can you use? Do you use it correctly?

COMPREHENSION - overall understanding of the language, structure, concepts, vocabulary etc.

ACCURACY - the right vocabulary, tenses, pronunciation and words in context.

PRONUNCIATION - are the words clearly expressed and understood?

SPEAKING\FLUENCY – stress, rhythm and intonation

READING – rate your comprehension(understanding) when reading from newspapers, magazines or books.

WRITING – rate your spelling. Sentence structure and use of the right tenses, prepositions etc.

VOCABULARY – variety of words, tenses, idioms and superlatives.

Review your answers (with another student/friend).

- which ones are you doing well?
- how will you improve the others?

USE ONLINE DICTIONARIES TO CHECK SPELLING

Use www.thesaurus.com to check spelling. Find synonyms and alternative/similar meanings to the word.

Use the new words in sentences to help you understand the meaning. Write the main word down and think of other similar words using the mind map format.

ORGANISATIONS/GROUPS

www.toastmasters.org – an international and non-profit organisation that can help you develop your leadership and communication skills. The regular meetings are supportive, and you will get lots of tips on presentation skills and public speaking. A good way to network, speak more, improve your confidence and language skills.

www.meetup.com - search for local groups to learn and practice English. Start your own conversation group.

APPS AND ONLINE

These resources allow you to personalise your learning and they give you a rating as your proficiency grows.

www.babbel.com – conversational online English courses. 15-minute lessons covering grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation.

www.duolingo.com – learn phrases and vocabulary, work at your own pace with fun bite-sized lessons.

www.tutlo.com – courses for children and adults. 20-minute sessions with a tutor at times that you choose.

www.yabla.com – immersive online learning-videos by native speakers in everyday situations.

www.bbclearningenglish.com – collection of resources, videos and online courses.

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/> - online resources. Take their free test to find your level and use the resources to help improve your English.

www.youtube.com There is a world of choice here. Search English, a grammar title, phrases, anything and enjoy. Try different videos because there are a range of styles, presentation styles, graphics etc. Here are some examples: -

mmm English

Elementalenglish

Learnenglish

Speak English like a native

Eat sleep dream English and many more..... The world is your oyster.

READING

AUDIO BOOKS – Good for listening on the go. Practice speaking the words as you hear them.

BILINGUAL BOOKS – many classic books are available with English chapters and your own language. Read a book that has a film or T.V. series available. Then connect the two – it can be easier to understand the story.

www.plutonediciones.com – is an internet search engine for bilingual books.

Read newspaper and magazine articles. Online or hard copies.

Do research on topics that interest you.

Follow and comment on blogs that interest you.

SPEAKING

Have an English night – speak only English. Eat English food, play games and watch T.V. Invite others. Invite an English speaker. Meet others for a meal or coffee and speak only English.

Join or start an English conversation group (meetup.com)

DO YOU KNOW AN ENGLISH SPEAKER?

Organise a language exchange over coffee. Meet an English speaker and practice speaking English. Or exchange language skills – teach them your language in return. Discuss local issues, films, specific topics that allow you to practice pronunciation and increase your vocabulary.

Use Skype or WhatsApp to practice conversation long distance with an English speaker.

LISTENING

Watch a T.V. series /films/DVD's – add subtitles to increase your understanding and enjoyment. Use pause, replay and slow the speed to help you to review and understand what is being said. Link this to reading a bilingual book.

Listen to news broadcasts – such as CNN, BBC, AL JAZEERA (English) and listen to different stations to get accustomed to a variety of accents. Listen to radio and T.V. of your choice.

Listen to academic or work-related talks and presentations. Live and online.

WRITING

Write letters and emails to contacts.

Write comments on blogs, social media, magazines or newspapers covering topics that interest you. Leisure or maybe work related.

Write and publish your own blog.

Write your daily journal or diary in English.

Most of all ENJOY LEARNING!!!!



Contact Keith to share ideas at - www.keithstewart.co.uk

All photographs by Keith Stewart

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