

Tips from an ESL teacher!

HOW TO BECOME AN ADVANCED SPEAKER





BECOMING AN ADVANCED ENGLISH SPEAKER

Good speaking skills are the sign of a well-developed second language ability. A person who is able to blend easily into conversations, listen attentively, and respond appropriately is going to be better equipped to make friends, impress in a job interview, and feel more confident in any conversation. However, it's not an easy process. There are several skills a student needs to study and master before they can be termed 'advanced'. Below are a list of areas to work on in addition to your ongoing grammar and vocabulary study.

PRONUNCIATION

This is probably one of the hardest elements to develop. You do not need to sound like a native speaker – you will always have an accent, and this is to be celebrated! Many native speakers of English find the sound of English being spoken by other nationalities to be exotic and appealing. But diction and clarity

are extremely important. You must work hard to ensure that you can produce the sounds of English greenwichcollege.edu.au in a way that is easy to understand, and that you can hear and reproduce the rhythm and music of English. Be aware of typical problems that affect speakers of your first language as well as sounds that you may find personally challenging.

QUESTION GRAMMAR

More than anything else, questions are the foundation of conversation. Without them, a conversation cannot progress, and of course, an incorrect question can result in you receiving the wrong information. Remember, questions do NOT start with nouns! Questions start with question words such as who, what, where, which, when etc., auxiliary verbs (do, have), modals (should, can, will), and 'be' verbs. The only exceptions are questions with tags (You're Susan, aren't you?) and confirmation/surprise questions ('Jake's moving to Melbourne?'). If your questions

are clear and correct, it makes you sound much more confident and competent.

LEARN PHRASES, NOT WORDS

You need to learn whole phrases (e.g., 'I haven't thought about that before', 'What's your take on the issue?', or 'I suppose it's a matter of opinion') and memorise their meaning. Initially, these sentences may seem awkward, but after consistent practice, you will realise the result is more fluent and natural-sounding conversation.

LISTENING SKILLS

Speaking is not a solo activity. Therefore, it is important that you understand your role as a listener. Listening means not just hearing the individual words your partner says, but also the meaning of their words, the tone and stress they use, and the message they wish to convey. You must also build your social skills to know the appropriate level of engagement and the right kind of reaction to show.

LEARN TO INSTIGATE CONVERSATION AND KEEP IT FLOWING

You can't always wait to be invited into a conversation. You need to be proactive and learn appropriate ways to start and maintain conversation. This may be as simple as remembering to use question tags ('It's a nice day, isn't it?') with falling intonation to show the listener that you are interested in having a conversation. Listening attentively and picking up cues from the person you are speaking to can help you think of the next question to ask. You must also consider 'turn-taking'. You don't want to conduct an interview, you want to have a conversation! All the people in the group need to have the opportunity to ask questions, answer them, and express their opinions.

HAVE AN OPINION

This may sound obvious, but it is essential that you have something to say! By reading widely, watching the news, and thinking about the topics that you enjoy or are important to you, you can develop your thoughts and views and be ready to engage in conversations. You don't need to know everything, and it doesn't need to be all about you – you

can talk about what a friend or family member told you about the topic, or you could mention an idea you saw in a movie or read in an article. It's about playing your part, having a voice, and being an active participant. Being good at asking questions is a great way to get out of a situation where you don't feel like you know much.

BE INTERESTING AND INTERESTED

It is my belief that there is no such thing as a boring topic – there are only boring people, and it is no fun talking to a boring person! If you want to practice and hone your skills, it requires an alert mind, an ability to direct a conversation, an appreciation of 'opinion' questions (how, why) as opposed to 'fact' questions (who, what, when, where), as well as a genuine interest in what the other person has to say. Be present, use appropriate body language, facial expressions, and sound words (Uh-huh, Mmm, Oh etc.).

CONVERSATION VS. DISCUSSION.

Remember that there is a vast difference between a conversation and a discussion. A conversation is freeflowing, eclectic, random, and rises and falls in speed, drama, and intention. A discussion, which is the more likely speaking scenario at

university or work, is focused, direct, has clear signals and intention, and usually has a clear objective or outcome. They serve different purposes, but both are essential skills.

IMITATE (TALENTED) NATIVE SPEAKERS

Not everyone is a good conversationalist, even in their first language. When you meet people who inspire you, watch them, learn from them, and copy their style. The internet is full of great examples of excellent public speakers, work discussions, fun conversations and interviews, all of which can give you pointers in developing your own skills

PRACTICE

As with all elements of a language, speaking requires practice. There is no shortcut, no easy path, no magic pill. There is only determination, humility, and desire to improve. Do not think that you need to be speaking only with native speakers – back in your country, and in many jobs, you will constantly be interacting with second-language speakers of English. The future belongs to a global community speaking one tongue, but speaking it in very different ways. You can be a part of it!



About the author:
JUSTIN MOON

I've worked at Greenwich for 17 years and have been teaching for over 30. My role has developed over the years here – I was a teacher trainer, a classroom teacher, a senior teacher, and am now the Master Teacher. My role takes me to the Greenwich campuses all over Australia to train and develop teachers, helping them to improve their skills and providing mentorship.

I have a background in theatre and dance, so my teaching style is active and

dynamic. I have taught almost every course at Greenwich – General English, Cambridge, IELTS, EAP – it doesn't really matter to me because I love my job very much! Teaching brings me great satisfaction and happiness.

Outside of school, I love gardening and nature. I live in the Blue Mountains and enjoy relaxing outdoors. I am an avid reader and love the English language. I love good food, good company, and interesting conversations.

6 REASONS TO CHOOSE GREENWICH ENGLISH COLLEGE

FLEXIBILITY



Timetable options, flexible payment plans & more frequent intakes.

OPTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY



Gain entry to over 30 institutions, including leading Australian Universities – without having to complete the official IELTS exam.

VALUE FOR MONEY



Our commitment to quality means you'll only learn from the industry's best teachers in a way that is practical, relevant to the real world and tailored to your personal goals. This means you'll be more satisfied, more knowledgeable, more confident and better prepared to succeed in business, everyday life or at university.

QUICK SUCCESS



Greenwich English students learn English faster on average with:

- › An additional 9 hours of FREE optional classes
- › The opportunity to move up to the next level, every week, based on progress testing
- › One-on-one fortnightly academic counselling, so you know where to focus your efforts

CONVENIENT LOCATIONS



Choose from four exciting campus locations – in the heart of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Gold Coast.

STUDENT DIVERSITY



Study with students from over 30 countries, helping you to build skills and knowledge quickly while also learning about other cultures. Best of all, you'll return home with lifelong friends from all across the globe.

