



## 28 Strategies for improving your English

Improving your language skills takes time and practice. Practice is also important not only to improve, but to maintain your existing skills. There are many ways that you can practice, so explore some methods to find what works for you.

### How to use this checklist

It's best to embed strategies for improving your English into your everyday activities. Choose at least three suggestions from the list below and see if you can implement them on a daily basis. Try them for a few weeks and see if you notice a difference. If one strategy doesn't feel like it's helping, or you find you can't practice it, select a different one.

Strategy	Worth a try?
1. Make friends with native speakers of English.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Start a phrase book to record new vocabulary. Make it a rule to practise new words each day - for example, "today I will find an opportunity to say 'evidently'."	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Arrange to share accommodation with local students or with an English-speaking family.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Don't confine your practice to locals or native speakers - you can practice with people from any language background, including your own. Make it a rule that you'll spend at least some time chatting in English. Correct each other and practice explaining new words or discussing what you don't understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. If you live with students of the same language background, have an 'English hour' each night to practice your language skills. For that hour, only speak to each other in English - practice articulating your thoughts and try out some new vocabulary. A gold coin penalty for not speaking in English applies. Use any money you collect to buy pizza or donate to an agreed charity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Read aloud – especially from newspapers, magazines and novels – for 10 minutes a day!	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Embrace all forms of technology to help you practice. There are a host of Apps, websites, films and videos that can help you immerse yourself in English. Smartphones and iPads give you access to a range of materials at anytime and (almost) anywhere - you can practice while waiting for the bus or just hanging out at home.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Watch English language movies. If you watch DVDs, select English subtitles to help you follow what is being said.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Watch Australian-made TV shows to help familiarise yourself with Australian accents. Find out what local students watch and do the same, then you can chat about the programs with them and get in some conversation practice as well.	<input type="checkbox"/>

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10. Find internet sites that have vocabulary, grammar, and speaking resources – for example, English for Uni <a href="http://www.adelaide.edu.au/english-for-uni">www.adelaide.edu.au/english-for-uni</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Attempt crossword puzzles and word games in daily newspapers/APPS (Don't worry if you find them difficult - most native speakers can't complete them either).	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Sing along to some favourite songs on radio, <i>Rage</i> etc – in English of course!	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Try some APPs on English language - they are a great way to get vocab, grammar and culture tips.	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Use communications technology in English. Try chatting with a friend in English via skype or messaging them in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Search YouTube for some English language and pronunciation resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Pursue an interest - it can be sporting, social, crafty, creative. Join a club or society such as those run by ARC, or investigate community colleges and local community clubs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Throw away that translation dictionary and buy a good ENGLISH LANGUAGE Dictionary (Collins Cobuild) and consider buying a Collocations dictionary – you will use both extensively for many years!	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Ask a native speaker friend to tell you when you get a word wrong, or when they do not understand you. If they use a word or phrase that you don't understand, ask them to explain.	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Attend Learning Centre workshops on speaking skills (conversation, oral presentations etc) <a href="https://student.unsw.edu.au/academic-skills-development">https://student.unsw.edu.au/academic-skills-development</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Make it a rule to speak up in each class or meeting at least once. For example, you could ask a question, agree with someone, give an opinion etc. Your tutor/ supervisor will love you for trying!	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Outside your classes, be the first to say hello to classmates when you see them around uni, even if you do not know their names.	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Search Australian media websites like ABC, SBS, or BTN for transcripts and audio files of news & current affairs topics.	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Buy a newspaper each morning and listen (online or via radio) and read along with Radio 2RPH ( <a href="http://www.2rph.org.au">http://www.2rph.org.au</a> ). Radio 2RPH is a radio station for the blind/ NESB that reads daily newspapers and magazines. Daily program guide is online.	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. When doing a group project or assignment, offer to be group leader or take minutes (TIP: read your minutes back so the group can clarify your meaning and understanding).	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Join a language / conversation group at UNSW. There are usually a number offered by Student Development International or The Learning Centre.	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Offer to tutor junior students in a subject that you know well. Advertise on school/ faculty noticeboards.	<input type="checkbox"/>

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<p><b>Want to know more?</b></p> <p><b>27. Talk to the people around you. Ask people about their culture and values and share your culture's rituals and values; eg, favourite foods, national holidays, weddings and funerals - what really goes on, education systems, names and their meanings, how and when to swear. Be non-judgemental, curious and friendly and people will respond.</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>The Learning Centre UNSW</b></p>	
<p><b>opportunities to speak and listen, such as discussions, group work and oral presentations.</b></p>	

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