

Understand Fast English the Easy Way Ep2

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

20 learning entries

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

1

to cut to the chase

DEF

to skip the unnecessary details and get straight to the main point

Informal and direct; often used to signal impatience or to save time in a conversation.

Let's cut to the chase — which drill helped your listening the most?

The coach cut to the chase: stop reading subtitles and start shadowing.

2

make up your mind

DEF

to finally decide something after thinking about it

Often used as gentle encouragement or mild pressure to stop hesitating and choose.

Make up your mind: shadowing or dictation for tomorrow's session?

She couldn't make up her mind about which podcast episode to practice with.

3

a piece of cake

DEF

something that is very easy to do

Very informal and upbeat; used to reassure someone that a task isn't difficult.

After a week of shadowing, the speed ladder felt like a piece of cake.

Don't worry about the dictation exercise — it's a piece of cake once you know the trick.

4

back to square one

DEF

back to the very beginning, with no progress made

Used when a plan or attempt fails and you must start over from the start.

He lost focus during the drill and felt like he was back to square one.

If the ladder speed feels blurry again, don't panic — go back to square one and slow down.

5

a rule of thumb

DEF

a general, practical guideline based on experience rather than exact science

Used to give simple, approximate advice that works in most situations.

A good rule of thumb is to practice one tool for ten minutes a day.

As a rule of thumb, slow down first and add speed only when the shape stays clean.



6

time flies

DEF

used to say that time passes very quickly, especially when you're enjoying something

A short, fixed expression, often said with a slightly surprised or nostalgic tone.

Time flies when you're deep into a shadowing session.

We said we'd practice for ten minutes, but time flies — it's already been thirty.

7

to get the hang of it

DEF

to learn how to do something well after practicing it

Informal; describes the moment a skill starts to feel natural instead of awkward.

Keep shadowing every day and you'll get the hang of it within a week.

Dictation felt strange at first, but Raj quickly got the hang of it.

8

up in the air

DEF

not yet decided; uncertain

Describes a plan, decision, or schedule that hasn't been settled yet.

Our weekend practice schedule is still up in the air.

Whether he'll try the speed ladder today is still up in the air.

9

to take it easy

DEF

to relax and not push yourself too hard; also used as a casual goodbye

Friendly and informal; can be advice to slow down or a casual way to say farewell.

If a drill feels too fast, take it easy and drop back to the slow pass.

Great session today — take it easy and see you tomorrow.

10

to hit the books

DEF

to start studying seriously

Casual and a bit playful; usually implies focused, dedicated study time.

Before the meeting, Raj decided to hit the books and review his vocabulary.

I'll hit the books tonight and practice the speed ladder twice.

11

shadowing

DEF

a technique where you listen to speech and repeat it immediately, copying rhythm, melody, and timing

Also called 'the mirror tool' in this episode; the goal is to copy the sound pattern, not just the words.

Shadowing helped Carlos stop freezing when native speakers talked fast.

Try shadowing a ten-second clip three times: slow, natural, then quicker.



12

dictation

DEF

a listening exercise where you write down exactly what you hear, then check it against the original

Called 'the detective tool' in this episode; it trains you to catch small, easily-missed words.

Dictation trained Raj's ear to catch small connector words like 'to' and 'has'.

For today's dictation, listen once, write what you heard, then replay to fill the gaps.

13

echo

DEF

a technique where you repeat what you hear a beat behind the speaker, to stay in rhythm without catching every word

Prioritizes keeping the flow going over perfect accuracy; useful when you feel yourself falling behind.

Anna used echo to stay in rhythm even when she missed a syllable.

If you lose the beginning of a sentence, just echo the last three or four words.

14

reduction

DEF

the way spoken English shortens or blends words, like 'gonna' for 'going to' or 'wanna' for 'want to'

Common in casual speech; useful to recognize when listening, but usually avoided in formal writing.

Raj learned to recognize reductions like 'gonna', 'wanna', and 'coulda' in fast speech.

Notice the reduction: 'we're supposed to' often sounds like one blended word.

15

a chunk

DEF

a small, natural group of words that native speakers say together as one unit

Learning language in chunks, instead of single words, helps you sound more natural and fluent.

Don't learn words in isolation — learn them in small chunks.

If your echo lag grows, shorten the chunk you copy to just a few words.

16

a toolbox

DEF

a set of practical tools or techniques you can use to solve a problem

Used metaphorically here for the five listening techniques taught in the episode.

By the end of the episode, you've added five tools to your English toolbox.

Keep your English toolbox within reach and use one tool a day.

17

to get the gist

DEF

to understand the general or main idea, without catching every detail

Useful reassurance for learners: you don't need every word to understand the overall meaning.

On the first pass, just try to get the gist — don't chase every word.

Yuki trusted herself to get the gist first, then zoomed in on the tricky parts.



18

linking

DEF

the way words connect smoothly together in spoken English, so the end of one word blends into the next

One of the key features of fast, natural-sounding English, along with stress and reductions.

Notice the linking in 'right in front of me' — it compresses into one smooth phrase.

Are the links smooth in your recording, or does each word sound separate?

19

to freeze up

DEF

to suddenly become unable to speak or react, usually from nervousness or panic

Describes the moment fast speech feels overwhelming and your mind goes blank.

His mind froze the moment the cashier spoke quickly.

After weeks of shadowing, Carlos stopped freezing up in cafes.

20

a reflex

DEF

an automatic response you no longer have to think about, built through repeated practice

The episode's main goal is to turn slow, conscious understanding into an automatic reflex.

The goal of these drills is your reflex, not just your knowledge.

Repeating the echo drill daily builds a fast, automatic reflex.

