

TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 04

Wake Up, Speak Up: Daily Routines in Real English

Full episode script · English

311 lines

Your English Toolbox

Hey, English Toolbox fam!

We are so excited to have you back today because we're diving deep into something absolutely vital for everyone, especially if you're a student, remembering your years at college or just want to understand how to maximize your day.

Welcome back!

We're talking about the daily grind, the very rhythm of life, specifically for university students.

This is going to cover everything from that first groan of the alarm in the morning to the last book closed at night.

We promise this episode is going to be a game-changer for you, packed with practical insights and useful English.

Trust us!

We're here to help you truly master how to talk about your daily routine, making your English more natural and fluent

Hello, English Toolbox listeners, I'm Martin, and I am absolutely happy to be here with you today!

We're starting an episode that's going to be packed with language insights and useful life tips.

And I'm Julia, your language guide and Martin's co-host in all things English!

Today, we're focusing on a topic that's easy for everyone to relate to yet really rich for language learners: the interesting world of daily routines.

Specifically, we're breaking down the typical day of a university student.

That's right!

From the moment that alarm rudely goes off in the morning – yes, we'll talk about that exact phrase! – all the way until they relax at night, we're going to explore every single step.

But here's the real benefit for you, our fantastic audience: this isn't just a story about a student's day.

This is a great lesson in everyday English words and phrases.

Exactly!

You're going to discover how to naturally talk about waking up, like how to admit you sometimes have to drag yourself out of bed.

We'll explore quick actions like glancing at your planner and easy movements like hopping on the campus bus.

You'll even learn how to describe that sleepy feeling after lunch with the perfectly informal food coma!

And trust me, for university students, phrases like being swamped with assignments are daily realities, and we'll show you how to use them genuinely.

You'll gain useful ways to express managing your time, changing between activities, and even getting ready for good sleep.

By the end of this episode, you won't just know what a student does all day; you'll know how to talk about it with confidence and skill, armed with all the interesting words and common idioms that native speakers use.

Stay tuned, because this is going to be really useful!

Exactly!

You'll hear authentic conversational patterns, perfect for boosting your fluency.

Secondly, if you're a current student, you'll gain practical, useful strategies for managing your time better, beating that tired afternoon feeling, and even improving your sleep.

These aren't just language lessons; they're life hacks for doing well in studies.

And speaking of making it real, we've brought in an amazing guest today who is living that university dream right now.

Someone who truly understands the balancing act.

Let's give a huge English Toolbox welcome to our wonderful guest, Poppy!

Hi everyone!

I'm Poppy, and I'm so excited to share my world with you all today.

University life is a wild ride, and I'm happy to give you a peek into how I try to keep it all together and maybe even do well in the chaos!

It's definitely a learning curve!

Amazing to have you, Poppy!

Your ideas are going to be incredibly valuable.

So, let's start things off with the morning.

This is arguably the most important time, the base that sets the mood for the entire day.

Poppy, what does your typical university morning look like, from the moment your eyes open, that very first awareness of the new day?

Alright, so my alarm usually goes off at 7:00 AM, but let's be honest, it often gets snoozed once or twice!

[Laughs] That snooze button is a powerful temptress!

Once I finally drag myself out of bed, which can be a very hard job some days, especially if I've been up late studying, the very first thing I do is head straight to the kitchen.

It's like an automatic magnet pulling me towards coffee!

"Drag myself out of bed" – I absolutely love that!

Such a clear, relatable image for those sleepy mornings!

It perfectly shows that feeling of really not wanting to get up, like your bed has this strong pull that you just can't escape.

It's almost a physical struggle, isn't it?

Absolutely!

It truly feels like a wrestling match some days!

After that, I usually make myself a quick breakfast.

It's generally something simple and healthy, like yogurt with granola and berries, or sometimes just a piece of fruit and, of course, a coffee.

Coffee is something I must have, it's my personal fuel!

While I'm eating, I try my best to avoid checking my phone for social media.

It's a clear choice.

Instead, I quickly glance at my planner to remind myself of my classes or any big deadlines for the day.

This helps me mentally get ready.

Smart move, Poppy!

That's a truly active and careful start to the day.

Avoiding the phone first thing is incredibly refreshing, wouldn't you agree, Julia?

It stops that immediate rush of outside information, all those messages and emails pulling you in different directions before you've even had a chance to focus on your priorities for the day.

It's about setting limits.

Oh, completely!

It helps set good intentions and really gives you a sense of control over your morning.

It's like you're telling your brain, "Okay, we're focusing on my agenda first, not reacting to everyone else's." After breakfast, what's next on the student morning plan?

Are we talking about getting ready for action, getting mentally and physically prepared for what university life needs?

After breakfast, it's straight to the bathroom to get ready.

That means a quick shower – nothing too long, water bills, you know! .

Then brushing my teeth and getting dressed.

I usually pick something comfortable but still good for campus.

Comfort is key when you're walking between buildings all day, possibly sitting through long lectures, or spending hours in the library!

No point in wearing anything too tight when you're rushing to a lecture across campus or settling in for a long study session.

Comfort over fancy clothes, a truly smart choice for student life!

It sounds like a practical, simple way that puts usefulness first.

So, after you're all set and feeling fresh, is it straight to campus?

Or do you have any pre-campus habits or last-minute checks you do before heading out the door?

Pretty much!

Once I'm ready, I usually leave my apartment around 8:30 AM.

I live fairly close to the university, so I often walk to campus, which takes about 15 minutes.

It's a great way to get some fresh air, wake up my body, and clear my head before lectures begin.

It's also a good way to get some steps in early and just enjoy the morning atmosphere before the academic day really starts.

If the weather's not good, like if it's raining or too cold, I'll hop on the campus bus.

It's super convenient.

"Hop on" is a nice, informal way to say get on the bus quickly!

It suggests ease and speed, like you're just casually jumping onto it.

It's much more lively and active than simply saying "get on the bus." It means a quick, almost easy action.

Alright, morning done!

And a very efficient and well-planned one at that.

Now, let's move into the main part of the day: the afternoon.

This is where energy levels can go down, and focus can drop.

How do you deal with those post-lunch tired feelings, Poppy, and stay focused during lectures or long study sessions?

It's a real challenge for many students, I hear!

The afternoon tired feeling is absolutely real, Martin! think every student knows that feeling!

My strategy involves a few key things.

First, after my last morning class, I always grab lunch at the student union or a nearby cafe.

I try to make it something balanced, with good protein and some vegetables, so I don't get that heavy, drowsy "food coma" feeling.

You know, avoiding too many simple carbs that give you a quick energy boost then a big crash!

A "food coma" – that's a brilliant, informal phrase for feeling incredibly sleepy and slow after a big meal!

We've all been there after a huge holiday dinner, haven't we?

It's when your body decides all its energy needs to go to digestion, and your brain just goes offline!

It perfectly describes that strong desire to nap.

Exactly!

It's like your body just shuts down.

Then, if I have a break between classes, or even if I just finished lunch, I don't just sit on my phone scrolling.

I try to be smart with my breaks.

I might take a short walk around campus, maybe to another building to grab a coffee, or find a quiet spot to listen to a podcast or some uplifting music.

It really helps to refresh my mind and clear out any mental foginess from the morning.

Sometimes, I'll even just find a bench outside and people-watch for a few minutes; it's surprisingly refreshing.

That's fantastic.

Those mini-breaks are absolutely crucial to keep your energy levels and focus up throughout the day.

It's not about working harder, but smarter, right?

Taking those planned pauses actually makes you more productive in the long run.

And when you're back to studying, whether it's lectures or individual work, how do you keep that strong focus?

It can be so easy to get distracted with everything going on around you.

When I'm in the library or at my desk in my apartment, I use a variation of the Pomodoro Technique.

It's a time management method.

I'll focus intensely for 45 minutes, putting my phone away and stopping distractions, then take a 10-minute break.

During those breaks, I might stretch, get some water, walk to the window and just stare out for a bit, or even do a few quick exercises.

It really helps to make my thoughts clearer, prevent mental tiredness, and avoid burnout.

It's like giving your brain a mini-reset, allowing you to come back to the task feeling new.

"Make my thoughts clearer" is such a useful phrase here – making your thoughts easier to understand, helping you organize them and see the bigger picture.

It shows a thoughtful, active way of studying, rather than just passively trying to take in information.

It's about active involvement, even in your breaks, because those breaks are serving a purpose.

Brilliant.

Planned breaks are the absolute key to a productive afternoon, not just for students, but for anyone with demanding mental tasks, really!

It's about respecting your brain's ability and knowing when it needs a moment to recharge.

Now, let's change focus to the evening.

Classes are done, perhaps some studying is finished for the day.

How do you relax, Poppy, and easily move from school work to your personal time and rest?

So, once my classes are done and I've finished my main study tasks for the day, I make a clear effort to change out of "student mode." It's a mental change.

Sometimes I'll go to the gym for an hour – that's a great way to release stress and get some physical energy out.

Or, if I'm feeling less energetic, I'll just go for a leisurely walk around my neighborhood, perhaps call a friend or listen to music.

It's really important for me to physically move and mentally switch focus to something not related to school.

"Change out of student mode" is a great way to describe mentally shifting from work to relaxation.

It means a clear effort to change your mindset, which is important for stopping stress and school pressure from building up and affecting your personal life.

It's a very healthy limit.

That's so important!

Giving your brain a break and letting it relax after a long day of learning.

What about dinner, Poppy?

Do you cook, order in, what's the usual plan for an evening meal?

I imagine it changes a lot depending on your workload and assignments.

It really depends on the day and how busy I am!

Sometimes I'll cook a proper meal with my roommates – we often do a "family dinner" once or twice a week, which is fun and a great way to catch up and relax together.

It helps create a nice sense of community.

Other nights, if I'm swamped with assignments or just absolutely exhausted from a long day, it's a quick sandwich, leftovers, or even ordering takeout.

The goal is always to have a good meal, even if it's simple.

Food is absolutely essential for the brain and body!

"Swamped with assignments" – that's a perfect phrase for being overwhelmed with too much work.

It's a very common experience, especially in school settings, and it really shows that feeling of having more work than you can comfortably handle, like you're literally covered in it!

Exactly!

You feel buried!

After dinner, if the kitchen is a mess, we'll usually do the dishes right away.

It helps to keep the apartment tidy and prevents a mountain of plates from piling up for later.

Then, it's usually some quality free time.

I might watch a show on Netflix, call my family back home, or just chat with my roommates.

It's important to have that social connection and relax before doing anything else.

Human connection and easy conversation are just as important as studying, I think, for overall well-being.

I completely agree!

That social relaxation is vital.

It's not just about what you do in the evening, but also what you don't do – avoiding work-related tasks and truly disconnecting.

And finally, the night routine.

Poppy, how do you prepare for bed, making sure you get good sleep after a busy university day?

Because sleep is something students often, unfortunately, skip, and it's so important for learning and memory.

By about 9:30 or 10:00 PM, I start my wind-down routine.

This is something I absolutely must do for me.

The first thing I do is turn off my laptop and put my phone away in another room.

No late-night scrolling for me! ... It's so tempting to just keep looking at social media or emails, but I know it seriously hurts my sleep quality.

It's a limit I have to keep.

That's discipline, Poppy!

And it's excellent advice.

Dimming the lights and putting away electronics really tells your brain that it's time to rest.

The blue light from screens can stop melatonin production, which is your body's natural sleep hormone.

So, it's a clear, physical effort to prepare for sleep, not just hoping to fall asleep quickly.

Exactly!

Then I'll take a warm shower to relax my muscles and calm my mind.

After that, I usually read a physical book for about 20 minutes.

It's so much better for my eyes and helps me feel sleepy compared to a screen.

Screens just keep your brain too active and busy right before bed.

A good old-fashioned book is far more calming.

Reading a physical book – a classic and incredibly good way to prepare for sleep!

It's almost a lost art for some, but clearly, its benefits for relaxation are clear.

Definitely.

Before I get into bed, I also quickly jot down a to-do list for the next day.

It's a small step, but it helps clear my mind of any lasting tasks or worries, so I can fall asleep peacefully without my mind racing about what I need to do tomorrow.

It's like clearing the mental desk for the night!

Then, it's lights out, and hopefully, a good night's sleep!

I usually go to bed around 10:30 or 11:00 PM.

That's so helpful!

Getting those thoughts onto paper helps prevent that "racing mind" feeling when you're trying to sleep.

It allows your brain to officially "clock out" for the day, knowing everything important is noted down.

Excellent advice for anyone, really, not just students struggling with school stress!

What a thorough, realistic, and incredibly helpful routine, Poppy!

From resisting the snooze button to jotting down tomorrow's tasks, you've shown us a fantastic example of a productive, balanced, and steady student day.

It sounds challenging but absolutely manageable, and you've clearly found a system that works for you.

Thank you so much for sharing all these personal details and practical ideas with us!

My pleasure!

Happy to help, and thanks so much for having me.

It was great talking about something so central to student life!

And now, for our favorite part, the moment you've all been waiting for, it's time for Julia's Language Lab!

Julia, hit us with those language points from Poppy's helpful routine!

Every phrase we discuss today is something you can immediately use in your own English conversations.

Thanks, Martin!

Poppy used some excellent, very natural phrases today, super useful for talking about daily life and routines.

Ready to break down five of them, and then throw in a bonus grammar tip that will make your English even smoother?

Absolutely!

Lay them on us.

What's first, and why should our listeners pay extra attention to it?

Is it one of those phrases that sounds simple but is actually quite detailed?

Okay, number one, and it's a phrase everyone can relate to, especially on a Monday morning: "Drag myself out of bed."

Oh, I know that feeling all too well!

[Groans playfully] Especially on a Monday morning when you just want five more minutes... or an hour!

It's like your body is glued to the mattress.

Right?

It perfectly captures that feeling!

It means you really have to force yourself to get up, usually because you're still super tired or just plain don't want to leave the warmth and comfort of your covers.

Poppy said, "Once I finally drag myself out of bed, which can be a very hard job some days..."

"Very hard job" – another great one!

A task requiring huge effort, just like getting up sometimes feels when you're utterly exhausted!

So, a perfect example would be, "On Monday mornings, I always have to drag myself out of bed before my first class." That really paints a picture of the struggle, doesn't it?

The sheer willpower required!

It truly does!

It shows the effort.

And notice how "myself" is used here.

It's a reflexive pronoun, showing that the action is done to yourself.

You're doing the dragging!

It's not someone else physically dragging you; it's you forcing yourself.

This structure is very common for these kinds of self-directed actions when you're using personal effort.

Next up, a phrase for efficient people: "Glance at my planner."

So, looking quickly?

Is there a small difference between "glance" and just "look" that our listeners should be aware of?

Definitely!

While "look" is general, "glance" means a quick, brief look, usually without much deep thought or checking closely.

It's a fleeting look, just enough to get the key information.

Poppy mentioned, "Instead, I quickly glance at my planner to remind myself of my classes or any big deadlines for the day." She's not studying it in detail, just checking the main points.

Ah, I see.

So you wouldn't "glance at a novel" if you were reading it for pleasure for hours, but you might "glance at the clock" to check the time, or "glance at a map" to quickly find your way.

Like, "I always glance at my watch to check the time when I'm in a hurry." It's all about speed and getting things done, right?

A quick visual check for important info.

Moving on to our third phrase: "Hop on."

Is that for something like public transport?

Like you're literally jumping onto it?

It sounds very light and quick.

You got it!

It's an informal and quite lively way to say you quickly get onto something, especially a way of transport like a bus, train, or even a bike.

It suggests ease and speed, almost like you're jumping on without much effort or fuss.

Poppy used it when she said, "If it's raining, I'll hop on the campus bus."

So, "Let's hop on the train and go explore the city center." Makes perfect sense!

It sounds really casual and easygoing.

You wouldn't typically say "hop on a plane" if it's a long international flight, but for a short bus ride or a quick bike trip, it's absolutely perfect and commonly used!

It adds a touch of conversational charm.

For our fourth one, and this one is guaranteed to make you nod in recognition: "Food coma."

Ah, this one's a classic after a big meal!

I think everyone can relate to this feeling, no matter where they are in the world.

[Laughs] It absolutely is!

It's that feeling of extreme tiredness or sluggishness that you get after you've eaten a large meal.

Your body is putting all its energy into digestion, and your brain just feels heavy and wants to shut down!

Poppy said, "I try to make it something balanced, so I don't get that 'food coma' feeling."

I definitely get into a food coma after a big Sunday roast, or a massive holiday dinner like Thanksgiving or Christmas!

It's not an actual medical term, is it?

Just a very descriptive informal one.

You wouldn't find it in a medical textbook.

Exactly!

It's entirely informal, a piece of everyday English, but because it's so descriptive and universally understood, everyone knows what you mean.

It paints a very clear picture of that post-meal tiredness and the strong desire to just lie down.

And finally, a very relatable one for students, and for anyone with a demanding job or a busy life: "Swamped with assignments."

That sounds like a lot of work!

Like you're drowning in it, maybe even literally surrounded by papers and books!

Precisely!

You've hit the nail on the head.

It means you're completely overwhelmed or extremely busy with a very large amount of work or tasks.

It suggests that the amount of work is so great that it's hard to manage, like you're covered in it, or it's piling up around you.

Poppy explained, "Other nights, if I'm swamped with assignments, it's a quick sandwich or even ordering takeout."

So, "I can't go out tonight; I'm completely swamped with assignments for my history class." That paints a clear picture of someone unable to do anything else.

It's a fantastic idiom for being overloaded with work, and it's very understanding, isn't it?

Absolutely!

It perfectly captures that feeling of being covered by tasks.

Now, for our quick bonus grammar tip before we finish this language section!

Poppy said, "My alarm usually goes off at 7:00 AM..." "Goes off" here is a really common and flexible phrasal verb that can have a few meanings, but in this context, it's very specific.

Ah, so "the fire alarm went off" means it started making noise.

Or "the bomb went off." It means it activated or exploded.

Exactly!

When we're talking about alarms, bells, or similar devices, "go off" means they start ringing or making a noise.

It's also used for bombs or fireworks exploding.

It's super common when talking about things that activate automatically and produce sound or a sudden event.

It's an important phrase for describing daily routines!

Super common and super useful!

Thanks, Julia, for breaking those down so clearly and adding that extra grammar insight.

These phrases really add a lot of naturalness and fluency to conversations about daily life, making our listeners sound much more genuine!

My pleasure, Martin!

It's all about helping our listeners not just understand English, but sound more like native speakers, using these common, everyday expressions.

Well, that wraps up our deep dive into the daily routine of a university student.

We hope Poppy's incredible ideas have given you some great English words, fantastic phrases, and practical tips for managing your own day, whether you're a student yourself or just looking to make your routine better!

There's truly something for everyone here, strategies that can be applied to any busy life.

Absolutely!

Remember, every little step you take in organizing your day, from how you wake up to how you relax, can lead to big changes in your productivity, your stress levels, and your overall well-being.

It's about building good habits, one day at a time, that grow over time.

And before we sign off, a quick call to action!

If you found this episode helpful, please hit that like button, subscribe to Your English Toolbox so you don't miss any future episodes packed with practical English and life tips, and please share this episode with a friend or family member who might benefit from these insights and English phrases.

Also, tell us in the comments below: What's one part of your daily routine you absolutely cannot skip?

What's your must-have?

We'd love to hear from you and learn about your important habits and daily rituals!

Thanks again for having me, Martin and Julia!

It was so much fun sharing my student life with all of you!

Bye everyone!

Keep practicing your English!

Listen to these phrases again, try using them in your own conversations tomorrow.

The more you use them, the more natural they'll become.

See you next time!

Take care, everyone!

Stay productive, stay curious!
