

A Childhood Memory That Changed the Way

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

18 learning entries

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

1

to express yourself

DEF

to communicate your thoughts, feelings, opinions, and personality in language — fully and accurately

Express yourself is the ultimate goal of language learning. It is not about grammar or vocabulary — it is about having the linguistic tools to say exactly what you mean, with the nuance you intend. Many learners plateau at a functional level but feel frustrated because they cannot fully express themselves — they are reduced to simpler thoughts than they actually have.

The goal is to express yourself in English exactly as you do in your mother tongue — with all your complexity.

She started feeling truly comfortable in English when she could finally express herself with the same wit she had in Spanish.

2

to pay attention

DEF

to focus your mind deliberately on something or someone, giving it your full concentration

Pay attention is a fundamental phrase in English — used by teachers, parents, managers, and mindfulness practitioners. In language learning, paying attention is the difference between passive exposure and active acquisition. You cannot learn by accident.

Pay attention to the rhythm of the sentences — not just the meaning, but the music of the language.

She paid attention to every nuance in Peter's voice and noticed patterns she had never noticed before.

3

no pressure

DEF

Used to show that someone is free to refuse or decide later.

A friendly conversational phrase that reduces social obligation.

We should have coffee sometime—no pressure.

You can answer tomorrow; there is no pressure.

4

hide behind

DEF

To use something as a way of avoiding exposure, responsibility or a real difficulty.

Here, complicated language conceals incomplete understanding.

Or hide behind a complicated word.

Do not hide behind endless highlighting.



5

in passing

DEF

Briefly and without treating something as the main topic.

Common with mention, say and refer to.

I first mentioned Elena in passing in episode seventy.

She mentioned the new project in passing.

6

to question something

DEF

to express doubt about whether something is true, right, or justified — to not accept it without examination

Question is the core verb of critical thinking. It does not mean to be negative or aggressive — it means to not accept automatically.

The best English learners question the grammar rules they are taught: is this always true? Are there exceptions? What is the logic?

Critical thinking starts with a simple habit: question what you are told before you accept it.

She questioned the grammar rule she had learned for years and discovered there were important exceptions.

7

to put on

DEF

to organise and present a show, event, or performance

Putting on a show involves everything invisible — lighting, sound, choreography, costumes, crew — not just the performance itself.

They put on the most spectacular show I have ever seen in my life.

Putting on a world tour costs millions and takes years to plan.

8

by heart

DEF

From memory, with the ability to reproduce something without looking.

The fixed expression is learn or know something by heart, not by memory.

Number one, learn your three open questions by heart.

Learn your three opening questions by heart before the event.

9

out loud

DEF

Using your voice so that the words can be heard, rather than saying or reading them silently.

Out loud and aloud have the same core meaning, but out loud is more common in everyday conversation.

Say the word out loud exactly as you heard it.

Reading the dialogue out loud helps you notice its rhythm.

10

to grow up

DEF

to develop from a child to an adult; to mature emotionally or mentally

Deceptively rich: 'I grew up in London' (place) vs. 'you need to grow up' (emotional maturity) — both common.

I grew up in a small coastal town where everyone knew everyone else.

Some people grow up very fast when faced with difficult circumstances.



11

to hesitate

DEF

to pause before speaking or acting, often because of uncertainty, self-doubt, or the need to think

Hesitate is the verb for the pause before speaking. In a second language, hesitation is almost universal — it is not a sign of low ability but of careful thinking. The goal is not to stop hesitating entirely but to hesitate less often and recover from it more smoothly.

It is normal to hesitate in a second language — the goal is to hesitate less as confidence grows.

She used to hesitate for so long before answering that conversations became awkward, but she learned to speak immediately.

12

to linger

DEF

to stay somewhere or continue doing something longer than necessary, usually because you are enjoying it

Lingering is the opposite of rushing — a beautiful word for the quality of slowing down and savouring a moment.

She lingered over her morning coffee, listening to the birds outside.

Don't linger in bed too long, or the whole morning slips away.

13

to adjust

DEF

to make a small change to something in order to improve it or make it more suitable

Adjust is the fine-tuning verb. It implies a smaller change than 'change' or 'fix' — a calibration rather than a replacement. In AI workflows, adjusting means telling the AI exactly what needs to change: the tone, the length, the level of formality, a specific word. In language learning, adjusting register, vocabulary, or pronunciation all involve small deliberate changes rather than complete rewrites.

Adjust one thing at a time when refining AI output — changing everything at once makes it hard to know what worked.

She adjusted the formality of the email from casual to professional and immediately got a more positive response.

14

to shape

DEF

to strongly influence or determine what something or someone becomes

Central to childhood memory narratives — the experiences, people, places that left a lasting imprint on who you are.

That single encounter shaped his entire worldview for the rest of his life.

Childhood experiences shape the emotional language we use well into adulthood.

15

accent

DEF

a distinctive way of pronouncing a language, typical of a region, country, or social group

Different accents change the rhythm and vocabulary of speech, but they still rely on the same core patterns of linking, reduction, and stress underneath.

Martin, you really nailed a London accent.

If you listen for patterns instead of individual words, accents feel like different songs with the same beat.



16

confidence

DEF

belief in your own ability; the feeling that you can do something well

Confidence in language learning is built through repetition and small successes — it grows, not given. Speaking slowly and correctly builds more confidence than speaking fast and wrong.

Each time you shadow correctly, your confidence grows a little more.

Real confidence comes from preparing well, not from pretending to know more than you do.

17

connect

DEF

to join or link together

to establish a relationship or bond

Connecting with others is essential for building relationships.

It's about noticing the things people reveal without meaning to reveal them, not to judge, but to connect.

Empathy replaces distance with connection.

18

to notice

DEF

To become aware of something or someone by seeing, hearing, or feeling them.

To pay attention to something or someone.

'To notice' implies a conscious act of becoming aware, often used in everyday contexts to describe the act of perceiving something that might not be immediately obvious.

Just noticing.

So two phrases here: "to notice", and "to flow".

