

The Power of the Pause: Why Slow English Sounds Confident

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

12 learning entries

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

1

deliberate pause

DEF

A silence chosen intentionally before or between ideas.

It gives the listener time to process and can emphasize the next word.

Use a deliberate pause before your key message.

Her deliberate pause made everyone listen.

2

filler word

DEF

A word or sound used while thinking that adds little or no meaning.

Common examples include um, uh, like and you know.

Replace the filler word with silence.

Too many filler words can distract the listener.

3

active vocabulary

DEF

Words you can retrieve and use naturally when speaking or writing.

It is usually smaller than receptive vocabulary, which includes words you only recognize.

Repeated use moves a word into your active vocabulary.

The word is not in my active vocabulary yet.

4

walk away with

DEF

To leave an experience having gained something useful.

Often introduces the practical benefit a learner will receive.

You will walk away with three practical speaking tools.

I walked away with a clearer way to organise my ideas.

5

rush

DEF

To do or say something too quickly because of pressure or anxiety.

In speaking, rushing often reduces clarity and increases filler words.

Learners often rush when silence makes them uncomfortable.

Do not rush the final words of your sentence.



6

fill every gap

DEF

To put sound or speech into every moment of silence.

The phrase is often used critically when unnecessary words replace useful pauses.

You do not need to fill every gap with um or uh.

Confident speakers resist the urge to fill every gap.

7

on purpose

DEF

Intentionally, as the result of a conscious decision.

It contrasts with by accident and commonly follows a verb.

Slow the final words down on purpose.

She paused on purpose before giving the answer.

8

buy yourself time

DEF

To create a little extra time in which to think or act.

A natural conversational expression; the time is figurative and is not literally purchased.

A short pause buys your brain time to find the next word.

Repeat the question to buy yourself time.

9

receptive vocabulary

DEF

Words that you understand when reading or listening but may not use yourself.

It contrasts with active vocabulary.

Your receptive vocabulary is usually larger than your active vocabulary.

Reading widely expands your receptive vocabulary.

10

get in the way

DEF

To obstruct, delay or make progress more difficult.

It can describe a physical obstacle or an abstract problem such as fear.

Something must get in the way for a story to have conflict.

Fear of mistakes can get in the way of clear speech.

11

under pressure

DEF

In a stressful situation where a decision or performance is required.

Common with perform, work, think and stay calm.

Word-for-word memorisation can be fragile under pressure.

She speaks clearly even under pressure.



12

let it land

DEF

To pause after an important idea so the listener can absorb it.

A modern figurative expression common in speaking and presentation coaching.

Pause after your key sentence and let it land.

He let the final message land before continuing.

