

VOCABULARY · EPISODE 14

Verbs Focus

Key words & expressions · English + Español

10 words

Your English Toolbox

1

to take action**tomar medidas · ponerse en marcha**

DEF

to do something practical to address a situation, rather than just thinking or talking about it

Take action is a verbal collocation that combines a general verb (take) with a result noun (action). This is how English builds vocabulary — through collocations, not single words.

ES

Hacer algo práctico para abordar una situación, en lugar de solo pensar o hablar al respecto.

Es una colocación verbal que combina un verbo general con un sustantivo de resultado.

Stop planning and take action — the first step does not have to be perfect.

Stop planning and take action. -> Deja de planear y toma medidas.

The best way to learn English is to take action every single day, even if it is just five minutes.

The best way to learn English is to take action every single day. -> La mejor manera de aprender inglés es ponerse en marcha cada día.

2

to wrestle with**forcejear con algo · luchar con algo**

DEF

to struggle with a difficult problem, idea, or skill over time, trying hard to understand or master it

Wrestle suggests a physical fight — the word captures the real effort of dealing with something that does not come easily. Language learners wrestle with grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

ES

Esforzarse con un problema, idea o habilidad difícil durante un tiempo.

Luchar sugiere un combate físico — la palabra captura el esfuerzo real de lidiar con algo que no sale fácilmente.

She wrestled with the difference between 'since' and 'for' for months before it finally made sense.

She wrestled with the difference between 'since' and 'for' for months. -> Estuvo forcejeando con la diferencia entre 'since' y 'for' durante meses.

He wrestled with irregular verbs all through his first year of English.

He wrestled with irregular verbs all through his first year of English. -> Luchó con los verbos irregulares durante todo su primer año de inglés.

3

to nail something

clavar algo · bordar algo

DEF

to do something perfectly or successfully; to get something exactly right

The image comes from hitting a nail perfectly — one precise strike. Nailing something in language means producing it correctly and naturally, without hesitation.

ES

Hacer algo a la perfección o con éxito; acertar algo exactamente.

La imagen viene de clavar un clavo perfectamente — un golpe preciso. Bordar algo en el idioma significa producirlo correctamente y de forma natural.

She nailed the pronunciation after weeks of practice — it sounded completely natural.

She nailed the pronunciation after weeks of practice. -> Bordó la pronunciación después de semanas de práctica.

He nailed the interview by preparing his answers in English three days before.

He nailed the interview by preparing his answers in English. -> Clavó la entrevista preparando sus respuestas en inglés tres días antes.

4

to wrap your head around

hacerse a la idea de algo · entender algo complicado

DEF

to gradually succeed in understanding something complex or unfamiliar

Wrapping your head around something takes effort — the metaphor is physical, like struggling to stretch a small head around a large idea. Used especially for grammar or abstract concepts.

ES

Tener éxito gradualmente en entender algo complejo o desconocido.

La metáfora es física, como esforzarse para estirar una cabeza pequeña alrededor de una idea grande.

I couldn't wrap my head around English conditionals for years — then one podcast changed everything.

I couldn't wrap my head around English conditionals for years. -> Durante años no me pude hacer a la idea de los condicionales en inglés.

Once you wrap your head around phrasal verbs, they stop feeling random and start feeling logical.

Once you wrap your head around phrasal verbs, they stop feeling random. -> Una vez que entiendes los verbos frasales, dejan de parecer aleatorios.

5

to keep at it

seguir en ello · no abandonar

DEF

to continue doing something with effort and persistence, even when it is difficult or slow

Keep at it is encouragement — it acknowledges the difficulty and says: don't give up. Often said when someone is frustrated with slow progress.

ES

Continuar haciendo algo con esfuerzo y perseverancia, incluso cuando es difícil o lento.

Seguir en ello es aliento — reconoce la dificultad y dice: no te rindas.

Keep at it — language learning feels slow until suddenly it feels fast.

Keep at it — language learning feels slow until suddenly it feels fast. -> Sigue en ello — el aprendizaje de idiomas se siente lento hasta que de repente se siente rápido.

She kept at her daily English practice for six months without missing a day.

She kept at her daily English practice for six months. -> Siguió con su práctica diaria de inglés durante seis meses sin fallar un día.

6

a building block

el pilar básico · el ladrillo fundamental

DEF

a basic element or unit from which something larger and more complex is constructed

Building blocks in language are the smallest meaningful units — words, patterns, or sounds — that combine to create fluent speech. The image is of a child building with blocks: start simple, build complexity.

ES

Un elemento o unidad básica a partir del cual se construye algo más grande y complejo.

Los pilares básicos en el idioma son las unidades más pequeñas con significado.

Phrasal verbs are building blocks of natural spoken English — learn them and everything else gets easier.

Phrasal verbs are building blocks of natural spoken English. -> Los verbos frasales son los pilares básicos del inglés hablado natural.

Each conversation you have in English is a building block on your way to fluency.

Each conversation you have in English is a building block on your way to fluency. -> Cada conversación que tienes en inglés es un ladrillo fundamental en tu camino hacia la fluidez.

7 to stick to

ceñirse a · mantenerse fiel a

DEF

to continue following a plan, habit, or commitment without giving up or changing course

Sticking to something is harder than starting — it is the daily choice to continue. The metaphor (glue) shows the need to maintain the connection even when it feels difficult.

ES

Continuar siguiendo un plan, hábito o compromiso sin rendirse ni cambiar de rumbo.

Ceñirse a algo es más difícil que empezar — es la elección diaria de continuar.

Stick to one learning method for at least three months before judging whether it works.

Stick to one learning method for at least three months before judging. -> Cíñete a un método de aprendizaje al menos tres meses antes de juzgar si funciona.

She stuck to her daily 20-minute English routine even when she was tired or busy.

She stuck to her daily 20-minute English routine even when she was tired. -> Se ciñó a su rutina diaria de 20 minutos en inglés incluso cuando estaba cansada.

8 to step up

estar a la altura · dar un paso adelante

DEF

to increase your effort, take responsibility, or perform better when the situation demands it

Step up is about rising to a challenge — it's the verb you use when someone or something requires more from you. In English learning, you step up by speaking when it's uncomfortable.

ES

Aumentar tu esfuerzo, asumir responsabilidad o rendir mejor cuando la situación lo exige.

Se usa cuando alguien o algo requiere más de ti — el verbo del reto aceptado.

When your teacher asks for a volunteer, that's your moment to step up and try.

When your teacher asks for a volunteer, that's your moment to step up and try. -> Cuando tu profesor pide un voluntario, ese es tu momento de estar a la altura e intentarlo.

The ten verbs in this episode help you step up your English in every area of your life.

The ten verbs in this episode help you step up your English in every area of your life. -> Los diez verbos de este episodio te ayudan a dar un paso adelante en inglés en cada área de tu vida.

9 to figure something out

descifrar algo · entender algo a base de pensar

DEF

to find the answer to a problem or understand something through thinking or experience

Figure out is more informal and active than 'understand' — it implies effort and discovery. You don't just receive the answer; you work it out yourself. Perfect for describing the learning process.

ES

Encontrar la solución a un problema o comprender algo a través del razonamiento o la experiencia. Más informal y activo que 'entender' — implica esfuerzo y descubrimiento personal.

You don't need to study every grammar rule — your brain will figure most of it out on its own.

You don't need to study every grammar rule — your brain will figure most of it out on its own. -> No necesitas estudiar todas las reglas gramaticales — tu cerebro descifrá la mayoría por sí solo.

It took me weeks to figure out how to use 'yet' naturally in conversation.

It took me weeks to figure out how to use 'yet' naturally in conversation. -> Me llevó semanas entender a base de pensar cómo usar 'yet' con naturalidad en conversación.

10 to sort something out

resolver algo · poner algo en orden

DEF

to deal with a problem successfully and bring it to a satisfactory conclusion

Sort out is a very British and widely-used expression for solving or organising something. It suggests that the problem was messy but you've now put it in order. Very common in daily spoken English.

ES

Resolver un problema con éxito y llevarlo a una conclusión satisfactoria.

Expresión muy británica para resolver u organizar algo — sugiere que el problema era desordenado pero ya lo has arreglado.

Before you speak, sort out your main idea — know what you want to say before you say it.

Before you speak, sort out your main idea — know what you want to say before you say it. -> Antes de hablar, resuelve tu idea principal — sabe lo que quieres decir antes de decirlo.

It took a few lessons to sort out my pronunciation of the TH sound, but now it feels natural.

It took a few lessons to sort out my pronunciation of the TH sound, but now it feels natural. -> Tardé varias lecciones en poner en orden mi pronunciación del sonido TH, pero ahora se siente natural.