

TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 33

# Can You Really Learn English in 90 Days

Full episode script · English

172 lines

Your English Toolbox

Vocabulary Exercises: Learning English with Honesty and Momentum

Introduction: From Podcast to Practice

Welcome to these targeted vocabulary exercises, designed to build upon the core ideas from the "Slow Listening Podcast" episode, "Can you learn English in 90 days?".

The episode offers a powerful critique of exaggerated marketing promises and provides a realistic framework for making meaningful progress.

As a curriculum designer, I've seen firsthand how a learner's mindset is more important than any single method.

These exercises are designed to strengthen that mindset.

By mastering the vocabulary below, you will gain the tools to critically evaluate different learning methods, set realistic goals, and build a personal practice that is both effective and sustainable.

Understanding these words is the first step toward changing your direction and building true momentum in your English learning journey.

Drill 1: The Story Puzzle Challenge

This first exercise is designed to move you beyond simple memorization.

By placing vocabulary into a narrative, you engage with the words in a more meaningful way.

The story below mirrors the emotional journey described in the podcast: from the initial pressure and frustration caused by exaggerated promises to the calm and stability that come from building a sustainable system.

This context helps secure the vocabulary in your long-term memory.

Your Task: Complete the story below using the words from the list.

Each word is used only once.

You may need to change the grammatical form of the word (e.g., from verb to noun, or change the tense).

Good luck!

Word Bank

expectations

pressure

frustration

vague

unrealistic

recover

freeze

handle

stability

momentum

direction

calm

blame

chase

spot

Complete the Story Alex felt immense (1) to learn the new software for his job.

His (2) were completely (3), fueled by (4) promises he saw in online ads.

Inevitably, this led to deep (5).

Whenever he hit a problem, he would (6), unable to think clearly.

He didn't know how to (7) this feeling and started to (8) himself for his slow progress.

He felt lost, with no clear (9).

He decided to stop trying to (10) an impossible goal.

Instead, he focused on building (11) and steady (12).

His new, smaller goal was to learn to (13) quickly from mistakes and remain (14).

He also trained himself to (15) the negative thought patterns that held him back.

This change in approach was the key to making real, sustainable progress.

Now that you've seen the words in action, let's test your ability to distinguish their precise meanings.

### Drill 2: Find the Fake Friend

This drill is designed to arm you against the vague and emotionally charged language used in marketing, which the podcast critiques.

By distinguishing between the real meaning of a word like 'fluency' and its marketing definition, you protect your motivation.

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Precision is essential for clear communication, and this exercise trains you to identify subtle but critical differences in meaning, helping you avoid common traps and assumptions.

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Your Task: For each word below, choose the correct definition (A or B).

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The incorrect definition is designed to be a "fake friend"—it looks plausible but is misleading.

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Read both options very carefully before you decide.

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Fluency A.

---

The ability to speak very fast with a perfect accent.

---

The ability to express opinions and react in conversation without panic or constant mental translation.

---

Urgency A.

---

The quality of feeling that something requires immediate action, often used in marketing to create fear of missing out.

---

A feeling of excitement and motivation to start a new project.

---

Discipline A.

---

The natural talent that some people have for learning languages.

---

A quality that learners often unfairly blame themselves for lacking when they fail to meet exaggerated goals.

---

Dependency A.

---

A relationship where a learner relies on a specific program or challenge and loses direction when it ends.

---

The positive habit of studying with a partner to stay motivated.

---

Sustainability A.

---

A learning method that is very fast and intense, designed for quick results.

---

A quality of a system or habit that allows it to continue for a long time without causing burnout.

---

Flaw A.

---

A mistake or weakness in a learning process; the podcast argues that repetition is not this.

---

The most difficult part of learning a language, such as grammar.

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Redefine A.

---

To invent a completely new word.

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To change the meaning or definition of a concept, such as "success," to be more realistic.

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### Challenge A.

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To question whether a claim or promise is true or valid.

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A type of language-learning product that promises fast results.

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### Exaggerated A.

---

Made to seem larger, better, or more important than it really is; used to describe marketing promises.

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A learning method that focuses on advanced vocabulary from the start.

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### Chaotic A.

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A learning style that involves using many different apps and websites at the same time.

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Lacking order and clarity; the podcast suggests that slow, clear, repeated content is less chaotic.

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### Impressive A.

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A quality of a learning plan that looks good in online posts, often involving dramatic countdowns.

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A difficult grammar point that shows a high level of English.

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### Protect A.

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To create a perfect study environment with no distractions.

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To keep your motivation safe from harm by using better, more realistic progress markers.

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Once you have made your choices, proceed to the answer key to check your work and review the learning notes.

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### Answer Key & Explanations

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An answer key is more than a way to check for mistakes; it's a tool for deeper learning.

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Please take the time to read the explanations for each answer.

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Understanding why a word is used in a specific context is crucial for solidifying your knowledge and using it confidently in your own speaking and writing.

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### 3.1.

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#### Answers for Drill 1: The Story Puzzle Challenge

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The Completed Story Alex felt immense pressure to learn the new software for his job.

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His expectations were completely unrealistic, fueled by vague promises he saw in online ads.

---

Inevitably, this led to deep frustration.

---

Whenever he hit a problem, he would freeze, unable to think clearly.

---

He didn't know how to handle this feeling and started to blame himself for his slow progress.

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He felt lost, with no clear direction.

---

He decided to stop trying to chase an impossible goal.

---

Instead, he focused on building stability and steady momentum.

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His new, smaller goal was to learn to recover quickly from mistakes and remain calm.

---

He also trained himself to spot the negative thought patterns that held him back.

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This change in approach was the key to making real, sustainable progress.

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Pressure: Explanation: The podcast identifies emotional 'pressure' as a key marketing tactic that makes learners feel worried and rushed.

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Expectations: Explanation: This word connects to the 'unrealistic expectations' the podcast says are created when marketing hides the true starting point or effort required.

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Unrealistic: Explanation: This adjective is central to the podcast's critique of goals like 'fluency in 90 days' for most learners.

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Vague: Explanation: The source argues that marketing uses 'vague' definitions of words like 'fluency' because if a promise can't be measured, it can't be challenged.

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Frustration: Explanation: According to the source, 'frustration' and guilt are the inevitable results when learners can't meet exaggerated promises.

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Freeze: Explanation: This is the specific problem Ravi experienced in meetings; the podcast explains it's caused by pressure, not a lack of vocabulary.

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Handle: Explanation: Lucia's story presents a realistic goal: she wanted to 'handle' standard phone calls calmly, which is a concrete skill.

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Blame: Explanation: The podcast states that when learners fail to reproduce marketing results, they unfairly 'blame' themselves for a lack of discipline.

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Direction: Explanation: A major criticism in the source is that after a challenge ends, learners lose 'direction'.

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A good system provides this for the long term.

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Chase: Explanation: The podcast advises learners to stop 'chasing' vague marketing promises and instead focus on building a sustainable system.

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Stability: Explanation: The podcast presents 'stability'—the ability to show up regularly—as the realistic and powerful alternative to the marketing promise of 'fluency'.

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Momentum: Explanation: According to the source, the true goal of a 90-day block is 'momentum', the point where English stops feeling foreign.

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Recover: Explanation: This verb reflects a more realistic goal presented in the podcast: not "I never freeze," but "I recover faster" from mistakes.

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Calm: Explanation: In Lucia's story, becoming 'calm' on the phone was the first sign of progress, and the source notes that this calm is what allows confidence to appear.

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Spot: Explanation: One of the podcast's stated goals is to teach listeners how to 'spot' unrealistic marketing language to protect their motivation.

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3.2.

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Answers for Drill 2: Find the Fake Friend

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Fluency

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The ability to speak very fast with a perfect accent.

---

The ability to express opinions and react in conversation without panic or constant mental translation.

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Learning Note: The podcast emphasizes that true fluency is about comfortable and authentic communication, not just speed or accent.

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Urgency

---

The quality of feeling that something requires immediate action, often used in marketing to create fear of missing out.

---

A feeling of excitement and motivation to start a new project.

---

Learning Note: The source text connects 'urgency' to a marketing tactic that makes learners feel they are late or running out of time.

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Discipline

---

The natural talent that some people have for learning languages.

---

A quality that learners often unfairly blame themselves for lacking when they fail to meet exaggerated goals.

---

Learning Note: The podcast argues that when learners fail, they blame themselves for a lack of 'discipline', when the real problem is the unrealistic system.

---

Dependency

---

A relationship where a learner relies on a specific program or challenge and loses direction when it ends.

---

The positive habit of studying with a partner to stay motivated.

---

Learning Note: A key message is that a good plan should build identity and independence, not dependency on an external system.

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Sustainability

---

A learning method that is very fast and intense, designed for quick results.

---

A quality of a system or habit that allows it to continue for a long time without causing burnout.

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Learning Note: The text contrasts marketing's urgency with the need for a 'sustainable' practice that fits into a normal life.

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## Flaw

A mistake or weakness in a learning process; the podcast argues that repetition is not this.

The most difficult part of learning a language, such as grammar.

Learning Note: The podcast reframes repetition not as a 'flaw' or something to be skipped, but as the essential process of learning itself.

## Redefine

To invent a completely new word.

To change the meaning or definition of a concept, such as "success," to be more realistic.

Learning Note: The episode's core idea is that we can make progress in 90 days if we 'redefine' success away from the vague marketing promise of 'fluency'.

## Challenge

To question whether a claim or promise is true or valid.

A type of language-learning product that promises fast results.

Learning Note: In the context of "if it cannot be measured, it can never be challenged," the verb means to dispute the validity of the promise.

## Exaggerated

Made to seem larger, better, or more important than it really is; used to describe marketing promises.

A learning method that focuses on advanced vocabulary from the start.

Learning Note: This word is used to describe the "hidden cost of exaggerated promises" that set learners up for frustration.

## Chaotic

A learning style that involves using many different apps and websites at the same time.

Lacking order and clarity; the podcast suggests that slow, clear, repeated content is less chaotic.

Learning Note: Ravi's story shows that reducing content to something less 'chaotic' is key to making progress when feeling overwhelmed.

## Impressive

A quality of a learning plan that looks good in online posts, often involving dramatic countdowns.

A difficult grammar point that shows a high level of English.

Learning Note: The podcast makes a distinction between a plan that 'looks impressive online' and a plan that is boring but actually works.

## Protect

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To create a perfect study environment with no distractions.

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To keep your motivation safe from harm by using better, more realistic progress markers.

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Learning Note: The episode states that one of its goals is to help you 'protect your motivation' from the damage caused by unrealistic marketing.

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