

English for Farsi Speaking People

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

18 learning entries

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

1

a false friend

DEF

a word in a foreign language that looks or sounds similar to a word in your native language but has a completely different meaning

A word that looks familiar across languages but has a different meaning; always verify it in context.

In English, 'sensible' means 'reasonable' — not 'sensitive'. This is a classic false friend for many learners.

Once you know a false friend, you will never forget it — they are unforgettable precisely because they tricked you once.

2

to get mixed up

DEF

to confuse two things, people, or ideas and mistake one for the other; to become confused or disoriented

Get mixed up is natural and informal — it happens to every learner and to native speakers too. The key is to notice when you are getting mixed up and treat it as information, not failure.

It's easy to get mixed up between 'lend' and 'borrow' — they are mirror images of each other.

She got mixed up between 'affect' and 'effect' for years, but now she has a trick that always works.

3

to trip you up

DEF

to cause you to make an error or become confused, often unexpectedly

Trip you up is the phrasal verb for a hidden difficulty that causes an error. A word that looks familiar but means something different in English will trip you up if you do not check it.

False friends will trip you up if you assume familiar-looking words have the same meaning in English.

That word tripped her up in the exam because it looked exactly like a word in her first language.

4

deceptive

DEF

appearing to be one thing while actually being something different — misleading in a subtle way

The word looks honest but misleads. In language learning, deceptive vocabulary is the most dangerous because your confidence works against you — the more familiar a word looks, the more likely you are to assume you know it.

The most deceptive words in English are those that look exactly like words in your language but mean something completely different.

She found English vocabulary deceptive at first — so many words looked familiar but behaved differently.



5

to look up a word

DEF

to search for the meaning, pronunciation, or usage of a word in a dictionary or reference

Look up a word is the action that separates passive confusion from active learning. The moment you look up a word, its context is fresh and memorable. The habit of immediately looking up unfamiliar words — especially deceptive ones — is one of the highest-return vocabulary habits.

Whenever a word looks familiar but feels slightly wrong, look it up — do not trust the assumption.

She looked up every word she was not one hundred percent sure about and gradually her errors reduced.

6

to double-check

DEF

to verify something a second time to make sure it is correct — especially when in doubt

Double-check is the habit of verification. In language use, you double-check: a word you are not sure about, the meaning of a phrase that seems off, the spelling of a word before sending. Developing the double-check habit prevents confident errors — which are worse than uncertain ones.

When you are not sure whether a word means what you think, double-check before using it.

She always double-checked words that looked like her native language before including them in writing.

7

word choice

DEF

the selection of specific words to express a meaning — especially the decision between words that seem similar but have different connotations

Word choice is the difference between accurate English and natural English. Two words can have the same dictionary meaning but different feelings. 'Slim' and 'thin' both describe a body shape, but one is a compliment and the other may not be. Word choice is where real fluency lives.

Good word choice is what separates competent English from natural English — the right word in the right moment.

She realised her word choice was making her sound rude when she actually meant to be direct.

8

an assumption

DEF

something you accept as true without checking or verifying, based on what seems familiar or logical

You see a word, assume you know it, and use it incorrectly. Catching your own assumptions in language learning is a metacognitive skill — and it is one of the most valuable things you can develop.

The most dangerous thing in language learning is a confident assumption — it is the error you do not know you are making.

She had been making an incorrect assumption about the word for twenty years until she looked it up.

9

to be aware of something

DEF

to have knowledge or understanding of a fact or situation — especially one that could affect your learning or performance

Be aware of is slightly more formal than 'know about' — it implies active consciousness, not passive knowledge. In language learning, being aware of your own patterns — errors, habits, strengths — is the prerequisite for changing them.

Be aware of the false friends in your language pair — knowing they exist is half the battle.

She became more aware of her own error patterns after recording herself and listening back.



10

to transfer

DEF

to apply a skill, knowledge, or pattern from one context to another — especially from your first language into English
Transfer is the cognitive process that both helps and hinders language learning. Positive transfer occurs when your first language and English work the same way. Negative transfer (interference) happens when you apply a pattern from your first language that does not work in English.

Transfer from your first language can help or hurt — the key is knowing when to trust it and when to check.

She realised she was transferring word order from her first language into English, which explained a recurring error.

11

word order

DEF

The usual position of words and phrases within a sentence.

English and Farsi organise sentence elements differently, so literal transfer can sound unnatural.

English word order normally places the verb before the object.

Changing the word order changed the emphasis.

12

to throw the verb forward

DEF

To move the verb earlier in an English sentence than a Farsi speaker may expect.

An informal teaching metaphor used in the episode.

Throw the verb forward instead of waiting until the end.

She threw the verb forward and the sentence became clearer.

13

the W sound

DEF

The consonant sound at the beginning of words such as water and window.

It is made by rounding the lips; it should not become a V sound.

Round your lips to produce the W sound.

We practised the W sound with wine and vine.

14

the TH sound

DEF

The English consonant made with the tongue lightly between the teeth.

It may be voiced as in this or unvoiced as in think.

Let the tongue show slightly for the TH sound.

The TH sound can feel unfamiliar at first.

15

to distinguish between sounds

DEF

To notice and produce the difference between two sounds.

Distinguish between is followed by the two alternatives being compared.

Train your ear to distinguish between W and V.

Many learners struggle to distinguish between ship and sheep.



16

to rely on context

DEF

To use surrounding information to understand an unfamiliar word or sentence.

Rely is followed by on.

Do not translate every word; rely on context first.

We relied on context to understand the joke.

17

language transfer

DEF

The influence of patterns from one language on the use of another.

Transfer can be positive when structures match and negative when they differ.

Language transfer explains some predictable Farsi-English errors.

Positive language transfer can accelerate learning.

18

to retrain your mouth

DEF

To practise new movements until unfamiliar pronunciation becomes automatic.

A teaching metaphor combining physical practice and habit formation.

Slow repetition helps retrain your mouth.

She retrained her mouth to produce the new vowel.

