

VOCABULARY · EPISODE 58

Add ONE Word and Your English Changes YET

Key words & expressions · English + Español

10 words

Your English Toolbox

1

to upgrade

mejorar una palabra · elevar el nivel de tu vocabulario

DEF

to improve something to a better version or higher standard; to replace something with a more advanced or effective alternative

Upgrade is technology language applied to language learning — you can upgrade a single word and the sentence becomes more precise, more natural, or more sophisticated. One-word upgrades are a high-leverage learning strategy.

ES

Mejorar algo a una versión mejor o estándar más alto; reemplazar algo con una alternativa más avanzada o efectiva.

Lenguaje tecnológico aplicado al aprendizaje de idiomas — puedes mejorar una sola palabra y la frase se vuelve más precisa, más natural o más sofisticada.

Upgrade 'very tired' to 'exhausted' and your English sounds instantly more natural.

Upgrade 'very tired' to 'exhausted' and your English sounds instantly more natural. -> Mejora 'very tired' a 'exhausted' y tu inglés suena instantáneamente más natural.

Every week she gave herself one upgrade challenge — one word to replace with something better.

Every week she gave herself one upgrade challenge — one word to replace with something better. -> Cada semana se ponía un desafío de elevar el nivel de su vocabulario — una palabra para reemplazar por algo mejor.

2

a nuance

un matiz · una diferencia sutil de significado

DEF

a subtle difference in meaning, tone, or feeling that changes the exact nature of something — often difficult to translate directly

Nuance is the advanced level of language — it is where fluency becomes artistry. Understanding the nuance between 'sad' and 'melancholy', 'tired' and 'drained', 'happy' and 'elated' is what separates C1 from C2.

ES

Una diferencia sutil en significado, tono o sentimiento que cambia la naturaleza exacta de algo.

El matiz es el nivel avanzado del idioma — es donde la fluidez se convierte en arte.

The nuance between 'said' and 'whispered' is enormous — one word changes the whole feeling of the sentence.

The nuance between 'said' and 'whispered' is enormous — one word changes the whole feeling of the sentence. -> El matiz entre 'said' y 'whispered' es enorme — una palabra cambia todo el sentimiento de la frase.

She started noticing nuance everywhere once she began studying vocabulary at a deeper level.

She started noticing nuance everywhere once she began studying vocabulary at a deeper level. -> Empezó a notar una diferencia sutil de significado en todas partes una vez que comenzó a estudiar vocabulario a un nivel más profundo.

3

to refine

refinar · mejorar algo haciendo pequeños ajustes precisos

DEF

to improve something by making small, precise adjustments — moving from good to excellent

Refine is the word for advanced improvement. Once you have reached a basic level, the work becomes refinement: removing errors, adding precision, smoothing delivery. Refining your English is what happens between B2 and C1 — it is not about learning more, but about using what you know more precisely.

ES

Mejorar algo haciendo pequeños ajustes precisos — pasar de bien a excelente.

La palabra para la mejora avanzada. Una vez que has alcanzado un nivel básico, el trabajo se convierte en refinamiento.

Refine your English by focusing on the small differences that make it sound native rather than merely correct.

Refine your English by focusing on the small differences that make it sound native rather than merely correct. -> Refina tu inglés enfocándote en las pequeñas diferencias que lo hacen sonar nativo en lugar de meramente correcto.

She had spent years learning English and was now refining it — every improvement was subtle but significant.

She had spent years learning English and was now refining it — every improvement was subtle but significant. -> Había pasado años aprendiendo inglés y ahora lo estaba refinando — cada mejora era sutil pero significativa.

4

to sound polished

sonar pulido · hablar de forma fluida y refinada como un profesional

DEF

to speak or write in a way that sounds smooth, professional and refined — rather than rough or unfinished

Sound polished is the level goal beyond fluency. A polished speaker chooses words carefully, speaks with appropriate pace, and delivers ideas with clarity. This is the level that impresses native speakers — not just understanding, but craftsmanship in the language.

ES

Hablar o escribir de una manera que suena fluida, profesional y refinada — en lugar de tosca o inacabada.

El objetivo de nivel más allá de la fluidez. Un hablante pulido elige las palabras con cuidado y habla con claridad.

To sound polished in English, work on word choice, pace, and the pauses — not just grammar.

To sound polished in English, work on word choice, pace, and the pauses — not just grammar. -> Para sonar pulido en inglés, trabaja en la elección de palabras, el ritmo y las pausas — no solo la gramática.

After a year of deliberate practice, her presentations sounded polished and she was asked to train others.

After a year of deliberate practice, her presentations sounded polished and she was asked to train others. -> Después de un año de práctica deliberada, sus presentaciones sonaban pulidas y le pidieron que entrenara a otros.

5

to pinpoint

señalar con precisión · identificar algo de manera exacta y precisa

DEF

to identify something exactly and precisely — a specific error, a specific difference, a specific pattern

Pinpoint is the precision diagnostic word. Where 'find' is vague, 'pinpoint' is surgical. In language learning, pinpointing exactly which sound, word, or structure is causing a problem is the first step to fixing it. Vague feedback like 'it sounds a bit off' is less useful than pinpointed feedback.

ES

Identificar algo de manera exacta y precisa — un error específico, una diferencia específica, un patrón específico.

La palabra de diagnóstico de precisión. Donde 'find' es vago, 'pinpoint' es quirúrgico.

Pinpoint the exact sounds you struggle with rather than practising everything at once.

Pinpoint the exact sounds you struggle with rather than practising everything at once. -> Señala con precisión los sonidos exactos con los que tienes dificultades en lugar de practicar todo a la vez.

Her teacher could pinpoint exactly where her speaking broke down, and that precision changed everything.

Her teacher could pinpoint exactly where her speaking broke down, and that precision changed everything. -> Su profesora podía señalar con precisión exactamente dónde fallaba su habla, y esa precisión cambió todo.

6

to elevate your language

elevar tu lenguaje · mejorar la calidad y precisión de las palabras que usas

DEF

to raise the quality, sophistication and precision of the words and structures you use

Elevate your language is the upper-intermediate goal. It means choosing 'respond' over 'say back', 'endeavour' over 'try', 'substantial' over 'big'. It means building toward the register that is appropriate for professional, academic, or formal English situations.

ES

Elevar la calidad, sofisticación y precisión de las palabras y estructuras que usas.

El objetivo del nivel intermedio-avanzado. Significa elegir 'respond' sobre 'say back', 'endeavour' sobre 'try'.

Elevate your language by replacing basic words with more precise alternatives wherever possible.

Elevate your language by replacing basic words with more precise alternatives wherever possible. -> Eleva tu lenguaje reemplazando palabras básicas con alternativas más precisas siempre que sea posible.

She worked deliberately on elevating her language and within six months her emails read like those of a native professional.

She worked deliberately on elevating her language and within six months her emails read like those of a native professional. -> Trabajó deliberadamente en elevar su lenguaje y en seis meses sus correos se leían como los de un profesional nativo.

7

a synonym

un sinónimo · una palabra que tiene el mismo o casi el mismo significado que otra

DEF

a word that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another word in the same language

Synonym is the vocabulary expansion tool. Having multiple ways to say the same thing gives you range — you can choose the right register, the right level of formality, the right emotional tone. English is exceptionally rich in synonyms because it absorbed both Germanic and Latin roots.

ES

Una palabra que tiene el mismo o casi el mismo significado que otra palabra en el mismo idioma.

La herramienta de expansión del vocabulario. Tener múltiples maneras de decir lo mismo te da rango. El inglés es excepcionalmente rico en sinónimos.

Build a range of synonyms for common words — instead of only 'good', know 'excellent', 'superb', 'outstanding'.

Build a range of synonyms for common words — instead of only 'good', know 'excellent', 'superb', 'outstanding'. -> Construye un rango de sinónimos para palabras comunes — en lugar de solo 'good', conoce 'excellent', 'superb', 'outstanding'.

She learned three synonyms for every word she studied and her range of expression expanded quickly.

She learned three synonyms for every word she studied and her range of expression expanded quickly. -> Aprendió tres sinónimos para cada palabra que estudiaba y su rango de expresión se expandió rápidamente.

8

register

el registro · el nivel de formalidad en el lenguaje

DEF

the level of formality in language — whether speech or writing is formal, informal, neutral, professional, or colloquial

Register is one of the most important and least taught aspects of English. Many learners use informal words in formal situations or formal words in casual conversation. A sentence can be grammatically perfect but wrong in register. Developing sensitivity to register is what native speakers call 'sounding right'.

ES

El nivel de formalidad en el lenguaje — si el habla o la escritura es formal, informal, neutral, profesional o coloquial.

Uno de los aspectos más importantes y menos enseñados del inglés. Muchos estudiantes usan palabras informales en situaciones formales.

Pay attention to register — the words you use in a text message should not be the same as in a work email.

Pay attention to register — the words you use in a text message should not be the same as in a work email. -> Presta atención al registro — las palabras que usas en un mensaje de texto no deberían ser las mismas que en un correo de trabajo.

Her English was accurate but she often got the register wrong, using casual phrases in professional settings.

Her English was accurate but she often got the register wrong, using casual phrases in professional settings. -> Su inglés era preciso pero a menudo se equivocaba de registro, usando frases informales en entornos profesionales.

9

to be specific

ser específico · dar detalles exactos en lugar de declaraciones vagas

DEF

to give exact details and precise information rather than vague or general statements

Be specific is the advice that improves writing, speaking, and persuasion simultaneously. Vague statements like 'a lot of people' are weaker than specific ones like 'three out of five learners'. In English communication, specificity signals confidence, preparation, and trustworthiness.

ES

Dar detalles exactos e información precisa en lugar de declaraciones vagas o generales.

El consejo que mejora la escritura, el habla y la persuasión simultáneamente. Las declaraciones vagas son más débiles que las específicas.

Be specific when you speak — replace 'many' with a number, 'soon' with a date, 'some' with a name.

Be specific when you speak — replace 'many' with a number, 'soon' with a date, 'some' with a name. -> Sé específico cuando hables — reemplaza 'many' con un número, 'soon' con una fecha, 'some' con un nombre.

She learned to be specific in her English communication and her credibility in meetings improved overnight.

She learned to be specific in her English communication and her credibility in meetings improved overnight. -> Aprendió a ser específica en su comunicación en inglés y su credibilidad en las reuniones mejoró de la noche a la mañana.

10

to narrow something down

reducir las opciones · reducir el número de posibilidades aplicando criterios

DEF

to reduce the number of possibilities or options by applying criteria — moving from many choices to one or a few

Narrow something down is the search and selection phrase. In language learning, you narrow down vocabulary choices by considering register, collocations, and connotations. You narrow down which skill to focus on by identifying your weakest point. The phrase describes the precision process.

ES

Reducir el número de posibilidades u opciones aplicando criterios — pasar de muchas elecciones a una o pocas.

La frase de búsqueda y selección. En el aprendizaje de idiomas, reduces las opciones de vocabulario considerando registro, colocaciones y connotaciones.

Narrow down your vocabulary gaps — identify the ten words you need most and focus on those.

Narrow down your vocabulary gaps — identify the ten words you need most and focus on those. -> Reduce las lagunas de vocabulario — identifica las diez palabras que más necesitas y enfócate en esas.

She had too many areas to improve and spent a session narrowing them down to the three most impactful.

She had too many areas to improve and spent a session narrowing them down to the three most impactful. -> Tenía demasiadas áreas que mejorar y pasó una sesión reduciéndolas a las tres más impactantes.