

VOCABULARY · EPISODE 82

First Steps: Living in English

Key words & expressions · English + Español

10 words

Your English Toolbox

1

to find your feet

encontrar tu ritmo en un lugar nuevo · adaptarte hasta sentirte seguro

DEF

to become comfortable and confident in a new situation after an initial period of difficulty or uncertainty

Find your feet is a warm, encouraging idiom — it acknowledges that the beginning is hard and reassures you that it will get easier. Perfect for the experience of arriving in a new English-speaking country.

ES

Sentirte cómodo y seguro en una nueva situación después de un período inicial de dificultad o incertidumbre.

Es un modismo cálido y alentador — reconoce que el comienzo es difícil y te tranquiliza de que mejorará.

It takes time to find your feet in a new country — be patient with yourself in the first few months.

It takes time to find your feet in a new country — be patient with yourself in the first few months. -> Se tarda tiempo en encontrar tu ritmo en un lugar nuevo — sé paciente contigo mismo en los primeros meses.

Once she found her feet in London, the language improved dramatically because she was no longer anxious.

Once she found her feet in London, the language improved dramatically. -> Una vez que se adaptó hasta sentirse segura en Londres, el idioma mejoró espectacularmente.

2

to get the hang of something

cogerle el truco a algo · pillarle el tranquillo

DEF

to learn how to do something through practice and gradually become comfortable and competent with it

Get the hang of is informal and encouraging — it implies the skill is learnable and that you are getting there. Often used to reassure someone who is struggling. One of the most natural phrases in everyday English conversation.

ES

Aprender a hacer algo mediante la práctica y gradualmente sentirte cómodo y competente con ello.

Es informal y alentador — implica que la habilidad se puede aprender y que vas por buen camino.

You'll get the hang of English shopping vocabulary after a few visits — it becomes automatic.

You'll get the hang of English shopping vocabulary after a few visits — it becomes automatic. -> Le cogerás el truco al vocabulario de compras en inglés después de unas pocas visitas — se vuelve automático.

She found the London Underground confusing at first but got the hang of it within a week.

She found the London Underground confusing at first but got the hang of it within a week. -> Encontró el metro de Londres confuso al principio, pero le pilló el tranquillo en una semana.

to adapt to

3

adaptarse a · ajustar tu comportamiento expectativas o habilidades para encajar en una nueva situación

DEF

to adjust your behaviour, expectations, or skills to fit a new situation — often involving some difficulty before success

Adapt to is the adjustment verb. Unlike 'get used to' which is more passive — something gradually stops feeling strange — 'adapt to' implies active adjustment: changing how you think or behave to fit better. In professional and personal contexts abroad, adapting to new norms — workplace culture, communication style, social expectations — is a conscious and ongoing process.

ES

Ajustar tu comportamiento, expectativas o habilidades para encajar en una nueva situación — a menudo implica cierta dificultad antes del éxito.

El verbo de ajuste. A diferencia de 'get used to' que es más pasivo, 'adapt to' implica ajuste activo: cambiar cómo piensas o te comportas.

Adapting to a new culture takes conscious effort — observe, ask, and adjust rather than assuming.

Adapting to a new culture takes conscious effort — observe, ask, and adjust rather than assuming. ->

Adaptarse a una nueva cultura requiere esfuerzo consciente — observa, pregunta y ajusta en lugar de asumir.

She adapted to the British workplace culture faster than she expected once she understood the unspoken rules.

She adapted to the British workplace culture faster than she expected once she understood the unspoken rules. -> Se adaptó a la cultura laboral británica más rápido de lo que esperaba una vez que entendió las reglas no escritas.

to pick yourself up

4

levantarse · recuperar motivación confianza o energía después de un revés o fracaso — y seguir intentándolo

DEF

to recover your motivation, confidence, or energy after a setback or failure — and continue trying

Pick yourself up is the resilience phrase. It refers to the internal process of recovery — not just accepting failure but actively choosing to try again. It is used after professional disappointments, language learning frustrations, social awkwardness, or any moment when the temptation is to stop. 'You have to pick yourself up and try again' is both a practical and a motivational phrase.

ES

Recuperar tu motivación, confianza o energía después de un revés o fracaso — y seguir intentándolo.

La frase de resiliencia. Se refiere al proceso interno de recuperación — no solo aceptar el fracaso sino elegir activamente intentarlo de nuevo.

Picking yourself up after a setback is a skill — it gets faster with practice.

Picking yourself up after a setback is a skill — it gets faster with practice. -> Levantarse después de un revés es una habilidad — se vuelve más rápido con la práctica.

She failed the driving test three times but picked herself up each time and finally passed on the fourth attempt.

She failed the driving test three times but picked herself up each time and finally passed on the fourth attempt. -> Suspendió el examen de conducir tres veces pero se levantó cada vez y finalmente aprobó en el cuarto intento.

trial and error

5

ensayo y error · un método de lograr un objetivo probando diferentes enfoques y aprendiendo de los errores

DEF

a method of achieving a goal by testing different approaches, learning from mistakes, and improving with each attempt

Trial and error is the learning by doing phrase. It describes the process of figuring things out not by following instructions but by attempting, failing, adjusting, and trying again. For language learners, speaking in real situations is largely trial and error — you say something, see whether it works, and adjust. Understanding that this is the process — not a sign of failure — is a freeing insight.

ES

Un método para lograr un objetivo probando diferentes enfoques, aprendiendo de los errores y mejorando con cada intento.

La frase del aprendizaje haciendo. Para los estudiantes de idiomas hablar en situaciones reales es en gran medida ensayo y error.

Accept trial and error as the process — every mistake is data for the next attempt.

Accept trial and error as the process — every mistake is data for the next attempt. -> Acepta el ensayo y error como el proceso — cada error es datos para el próximo intento.

She learned how the local bus system worked through trial and error — taking wrong routes until she mapped it herself.

She learned how the local bus system worked through trial and error — taking wrong routes until she mapped it herself. -> Aprendió cómo funcionaba el sistema de autobuses local a través del ensayo y error — tomando rutas equivocadas hasta que lo mapeó ella misma.

to be out of your depth

6

estar en aguas profundas · estar en una situación más difícil o exigente de lo que tu conocimiento o habilidad actual puede manejar

DEF

to be in a situation that is more difficult, complex, or demanding than your current knowledge or ability can handle

Out of your depth is the competence mismatch phrase. It comes from the swimming metaphor: if water is too deep, you cannot touch the bottom and may struggle to stay afloat. In professional and learning contexts, being out of your depth means encountering demands beyond your current competence — which is uncomfortable but often where the most growth occurs.

ES

Estar en una situación que es más difícil, compleja o exigente de lo que tu conocimiento o habilidad actual puede manejar.

La frase del desajuste de competencia. Viene de la metáfora de la natación: si el agua es demasiado profunda no puedes tocar el fondo.

Feeling out of your depth is often a sign you are exactly where you should be — at the edge of your competence.

Feeling out of your depth is often a sign you are exactly where you should be — at the edge of your competence. -> Sentirse en aguas profundas es a menudo una señal de que estás exactamente donde deberías estar — en el borde de tu competencia.

She felt out of her depth in her first meeting in English but used it as motivation to prepare more thoroughly for the next.

She felt out of her depth in her first meeting in English but used it as motivation to prepare more thoroughly for the next. -> Se sintió en aguas profundas en su primera reunión en inglés pero lo usó como motivación para prepararse más a fondo para la siguiente.

to come a long way

7 haber avanzado mucho · haber hecho un progreso significativo desde un punto anterior — haber mejorado sustancialmente con el tiempo

DEF

to have made significant progress from a previous point — to have improved substantially over time

Come a long way is the progress recognition phrase. It is used to acknowledge how much someone or something has improved — often said to reassure or encourage. 'You've come a long way' is a meaningful compliment in English. In language learning, moments when you realise how much you have improved — looking back at where you started — are powerful motivators.

ES

Haber hecho un progreso significativo desde un punto anterior — haber mejorado sustancialmente con el tiempo.

La frase de reconocimiento del progreso. 'You've come a long way' es un cumplido significativo en inglés.

Look back occasionally to recognise how far you have come — progress is easier to see in retrospect.

Look back occasionally to recognise how far you have come — progress is easier to see in retrospect. -> Mira atrás de vez en cuando para reconocer lo lejos que has llegado — el progreso es más fácil de ver en retrospectiva.

She looked at a recording of herself speaking English two years earlier and was struck by how far she had come.

She looked at a recording of herself speaking English two years earlier and was struck by how far she had come. -> Miró una grabación de sí misma hablando inglés dos años antes y le sorprendió lo lejos que había llegado.

to take it one step at a time

8 ir paso a paso · abordar una tarea grande o abrumadora centrándose solo en la siguiente acción inmediata

DEF

to approach a large or overwhelming task by focusing only on the next immediate action — rather than being paralysed by the whole

Take it one step at a time is the manageable progress phrase. It is advice given — and advice to give yourself — when a challenge feels too large to confront all at once. In language learning, in new jobs, in new countries, in new relationships — the skill of breaking the overwhelming into the manageable is both a practical and a psychological tool.

ES

Abordar una tarea grande o abrumadora centrándose solo en la siguiente acción inmediata — en lugar de quedar paralizado por el todo.

La frase del progreso manejable. Consejo que se da — y que hay que darse a uno mismo — cuando un desafío se siente demasiado grande.

When something feels overwhelming, take it one step at a time — focus on only what needs to happen next.

When something feels overwhelming, take it one step at a time — focus on only what needs to happen next. -> Cuando algo parece abrumador, ve paso a paso — céntrate solo en lo que necesita pasar después.

She stopped worrying about her whole language learning journey and decided to take it one step at a time — starting with listening practice.

She stopped worrying about her whole language learning journey and decided to take it one step at a time — starting with listening practice. -> Dejó de preocuparse por todo su viaje de aprendizaje de idiomas y decidió ir paso a paso — empezando con la práctica de escucha.

to keep going

9

seguir adelante · continuar con una actividad o esfuerzo — especialmente cuando es difícil y la tentación es detenerse

DEF

to continue with an activity or effort — especially when it is difficult and the temptation is to stop

Keep going is the persistence phrase. It is the simplest and most direct form of the perseverance idea. In language learning, keeping going through plateaus, embarrassments, and dry spells is what separates those who become fluent from those who give up. 'Just keep going' is as much a philosophy as a phrase.

ES

Continuar con una actividad o esfuerzo — especialmente cuando es difícil y la tentación es detenerse.

La frase de persistencia. En el aprendizaje de idiomas seguir adelante a través de mesetas y vergüenzas es lo que separa a los que logran la fluidez de los que se rinden.

When you feel like stopping, that is often when keeping going matters most.

When you feel like stopping, that is often when keeping going matters most. -> Cuando sientes que quieres parar, es a menudo cuando seguir adelante más importa.

She had a terrible month where nothing seemed to improve but kept going and noticed a breakthrough the following week.

She had a terrible month where nothing seemed to improve but kept going and noticed a breakthrough the following week. -> Tuvo un mes terrible donde nada parecía mejorar pero siguió adelante y notó un avance la semana siguiente.

to build confidence

10

ganar confianza · desarrollar gradualmente una creencia más fuerte en tus propias capacidades

DEF

to gradually develop a stronger belief in your own abilities — through practice, experience, and small successes

Build confidence is the self-development phrase. Confidence is not a fixed trait — it is built through action. In language learning, confidence is built by speaking even when unsure, by succeeding in small interactions, and by reframing failures as feedback rather than proof of inadequacy. 'Build confidence' implies the process is active and cumulative — not something that arrives on its own.

ES

Desarrollar gradualmente una creencia más fuerte en tus propias capacidades — a través de la práctica, la experiencia y los pequeños éxitos.

La frase de autodesarrollo. La confianza no es un rasgo fijo — se construye a través de la acción.

Build confidence by seeking small wins first — confidence in big situations comes from many small ones.

Build confidence by seeking small wins first — confidence in big situations comes from many small ones. -> Gana confianza buscando primeras victorias pequeñas — la confianza en grandes situaciones viene de muchas pequeñas.

She built her confidence in English by starting with short, predictable conversations at the local shop before attempting longer or more complex ones.

She built her confidence in English by starting with short, predictable conversations at the local shop before attempting longer or more complex ones. -> Ganó confianza en inglés empezando con conversaciones cortas y predecibles en la tienda local antes de intentar las más largas o complejas.