

Study Less, Learn More: The Easy Focus Hack Nobody Taught You

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

19 learning entries

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

1

attention has a leak

DEF

Your ability to focus is being gradually lost through small distractions.

A metaphor: attention is treated like liquid escaping through a hole.

Your attention has a leak every time a notification interrupts you.

Closing unused tabs can stop that attention leak.

2

walk away with

DEF

To finish an experience having gained knowledge, a skill or a benefit.

Common with courses, meetings, books and conversations.

You will walk away with a simple focus routine.

She walked away with three practical ideas.

3

hidden tax

DEF

An indirect cost or disadvantage that is not immediately visible.

Tax is figurative here: the cost is paid in time, energy or attention.

Every interruption carries a hidden tax on concentration.

Context switching has a hidden tax that we rarely notice.

4

attention residue

DEF

Thoughts about a previous task that remain after switching to a new one.

A productivity term explaining why rapid task-switching weakens focus.

Attention residue from the email followed him into the meeting.

Pause between tasks to reduce attention residue.

5

pull your attention away from

DEF

To cause you to stop focusing on something.

A separable phrasal pattern: pull someone's attention away from something.

A vibrating phone can pull your attention away from the lesson.

Do not let one mistake pull your attention away from the conversation.



6

unpredictable reward

DEF

A reward that arrives at uncertain times and encourages repeated checking.

Central to the psychology of notifications and habit-forming technology.

Social media offers the unpredictable reward of a new message.

An unpredictable reward makes people check more often.

7

dual-tasking

DEF

Trying to perform two attention-demanding tasks at the same time.

Often used instead of multitasking when discussing cognitive limits.

Dual-tasking made both the call and the report harder.

Driving while texting is dangerous dual-tasking.

8

fight for the same mental space

DEF

To compete for limited attention or working memory.

A metaphor presenting thoughts and tasks as competitors for space.

The podcast and the email fight for the same mental space.

Two demanding tasks cannot fight for the same mental space efficiently.

9

shallow work

DEF

Low-intensity work that can be done while distracted and creates limited value.

Contrasts with deep work.

Replying to routine messages is often shallow work.

She saves shallow work for the end of the day.

10

deep work

DEF

Focused, uninterrupted activity that requires full concentration and creates real progress.

A widely used productivity term associated with Cal Newport.

I need an uninterrupted hour of deep work.

Deep work helped him solve the difficult problem.

11

grammar finally clicks

DEF

Grammar suddenly becomes clear and intuitive after earlier difficulty.

Click is informal and means become understandable.

After enough examples, the grammar finally clicks.

The past perfect finally clicked during the story.



12

nothing to show for it

DEF

No visible result or benefit despite spending time or effort.

Usually follows effort, expense or a difficult experience.

I studied for two hours but had nothing to show for it.

He attended every meeting and had nothing to show for it.

13

open loops

DEF

Unfinished tasks or unresolved concerns that keep returning to your thoughts.

A productivity metaphor for incomplete mental processes.

Write unfinished tasks down so the open loops stop distracting you.

That unanswered message created another open loop.

14

buy you total presence

DEF

To give you the ability to be fully attentive in the current moment.

Buy is figurative and means obtain a benefit at the cost of a small action.

Five minutes of planning can buy you total presence later.

Putting the phone away buys you total presence in class.

15

Pomodoro Technique

DEF

A focus method using timed work sessions followed by short breaks.

Named after the Italian word for tomato because its creator used a tomato-shaped timer.

The Pomodoro Technique helped her begin a task she was avoiding.

Try one twenty-five-minute Pomodoro before checking your phone.

16

firework show

DEF

A highly stimulating burst of sights, sounds or mental activity.

Figurative in the episode, describing what phone scrolling does to the brain.

Scrolling before bed gives your brain a firework show.

The presentation was a visual firework show with very little substance.

17

progress is the fuel of focus

DEF

Visible improvement creates motivation that helps concentration continue.

A metaphor comparing progress to fuel that powers attention.

Remember that progress is the fuel of focus when motivation drops.

Small wins prove that progress can fuel focus.



18

mind wanders

DEF

Your attention moves away from the task without a deliberate decision.

A standard collocation in psychology and meditation.

When your mind wanders, gently return to the sentence.

My mind wanders after long periods without a break.

19

the zone

DEF

A state of deep concentration in which performance feels natural and time passes quickly.

Informal equivalent of the psychological state called flow.

She entered the zone and forgot to check the time.

Quiet music helps him get into the zone.

