

Master Any Subject, Master English: How to Make Learning Automatic

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

371 lines

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

You know how to ride a bicycle.

Probably, yes.

So here's a challenge, explain it.

With words, right now.

Explain how you keep the balance.

You can't.

Nobody can.

Your body knows something that your mouth cannot say.

And here is the secret of today's episode.

Fluent English lives in exactly that place.

Not in your notes.

Not in your lists.

In the part of your brain that acts

without asking permission.

Today, we show you the road to that place.

Welcome to your English toolbox

where we train your ears step-by-step.

I am Martin.

And I am Julia, friends.

We are so happy you are here today.

Before we begin,

remember that this episode has a home.

Youenglishtoolbox.com.

There you will find this episode



with its interactive transcript

and translations in Farsi, Spanish, German, and French.

Plus vocabulary lists, flashcards,

mini games, and PDFs you can download,

all completely free.

And today that matters more than ever.

Because those flashcards are about to become

your favorite scientific instrument.

Now, this is our third training session

with a very special book.

Everyday Genius by Nelson Dellis,

the four-time USA Memory Champion.

First, we learned how to remember

with ridiculous pictures and the memory palace.

Then we learned how to focus

with the tomato and the focus chair.

And today, the biggest chapter of all, how to learn.

Not English, not mathematics, not music, anything.

Because learning itself is a skill

and almost nobody was ever taught how to do it.

If you stay with us until the end,

you will walk away with three things.

One, the two memory systems inside your head

and the real goal of all studying,

which almost everyone gets wrong.

Two, the mastery toolkit,

active recall, spaced repetition,

the five magic boxes,

and a technique invented by a Nobel Prize physicist.

Three, and in the final part,



the complete system adapted step by step to your English.

So, let's learn how to learn.

Let's go back to the bicycle.

Because your brain has two different libraries.

Library number one, declarative memory,

facts, names, dates, definitions.

Everything you can declare out loud,

like Paris is the capital of France.

This library is conscious and fragile.

If you do not visit a fact, it quietly disappears.

Library number two, procedural memory.

Skills, movements, automatic actions.

Riding a bicycle, typing without looking at the keyboard.

Speaking your native language

without thinking about grammar even once.

This library is deep, robust,

almost impossible to erase.

You could avoid bicycles for 10 years

and your body would still remember.

And now friends, the idea that changes everything.

The goal of studying is not to fill library number one.

The goal is to move knowledge

from library one to library two.

From I know it to I do it without thinking.

That journey has a name, mastery.

And it never happens by accident.

It happens by design.

But before any technique, you need fuel.

Because this journey is long

and there will be boring days.



So the book gives us a simple exercise.

The five whys.

Write down what you want to learn and ask yourself why.

Then take your answer and ask why again five times.

I want to learn programming.

Why?

To get a better job.

Why?

To stop worrying about money every month.

Why?

Because I want my children to have the life I did not have.

Do you feel the difference?

The first answer is information.

The fifth answer is a heartbeat.

When studying gets hard and it will get hard,

the first answer abandons you.

The fifth one never does.

Find your fifth why and write it where you can see it.

Now the toolkit.

Tool number one.

And it destroys the way most people study.

Tell us friends, how do you usually review?

You read your notes again.

You highlight in yellow.

Maybe you watch the lesson one more time.

And it feels good, right?

Everything looks familiar.

Everything makes sense.

Well, scientists have bad news for us.

That comfortable feeling has a name,



the illusion of competence.

Familiar is not the same as learned.

Your eyes recognize the material

but your brain never practiced finding it alone.

And in real life, in the exam, in the conversation,

you are always alone.

The solution is called active recall.

Close the book.

Look away from the notes.

And force your brain to pull the answer out from memory.

With no help, it feels harder.

It feels slower.

Sometimes it even feels like failing.

And here is the sentence we want you

to keep from this whole episode.

If studying feels easy,

your brain is probably not learning.

Scientists call that healthy struggle

a desirable difficulty.

The effort is not the obstacle.

The effort is the learning.

Tool number two, timing.

Because your brain has a built in delete button,

scientists call it the forgetting curve.

Without review, you lose a big part

of new information in the first hour.

And most of it within 24 hours.

Your brain is not broken.

It is protecting you.

It deletes everything you do not use



to keep space for what matters.

So how do you tell your brain that something matters?

You come back to it just before you forget it.

That is spaced repetition.

Review today, then tomorrow, then in three days,

then in a week, then in a month.

Every successful return makes the memory stronger

and the next interval longer.

Each review flattens the forgetting curve a little more.

Until one day the information stops falling

and simply stays.

And there is a beautiful physical way

to organize all of this.

The Leitner system, or as we like to call it,

the five magic boxes.

Take five boxes and your flashcards.

Every new card starts in box one.

Box one, you review every day.

If you answer a card correctly,

so it moves up to box two.

Box two, you review every two or three days.

Correct again, box three once a week,

then box four every two weeks.

And box five, once a month.

Box five is the palace of mastery.

But here is the cruel, brilliant rule.

If you fail a card, any card from any box,

it falls all the way back to box one.

Even a card from the palace, no mercy.

And that is exactly why it works.



The system forces you to spend your energy

on what you do not know.

While the things you already know

come back just often enough to never disappear.

Let us show you this in real life.

Daniel is one of our listeners

from Bogota, living in Leeds.

Last year, he had to pass the UK driving theory test.

He studied the way we all learned at school.

He read the handbook three times.

He highlighted half of it in yellow.

The night before, everything looked familiar.

And he failed.

Not because he was not intelligent.

Because familiar is not the same as learned.

So for the second attempt, he changed the method.

He made flashcards and answered them out loud

before checking.

He used the five boxes 15 minutes a day

for three weeks.

No marathon nights.

No yellow highlighter.

He passed with almost a perfect score.

But that is not the end of the story.

Because on the bus back home,

Daniel thought about something.

Wait, I have been studying English for six years.

Exactly the way I failed.

Hold that thought, friends.

We are coming back to it.



Tool number three, mixing.

And this one is counterintuitive.

So stay with us.

The normal way to study is in blocks.

One hour of topic A.

Then one hour of topic B, clean.

Organized, comfortable.

And mostly must wasted.

Because inside the block, your brain stops thinking.

If the whole hour is about one single topic,

every answer comes from that topic.

Your brain is not choosing.

It is just following.

The alternative is called interleaving.

You mix similar topics inside the same session.

A problem from A, then one from B,

then A again, then C.

Now your brain has to stop.

Look at each problem and ask,

which tool do I need here?

And that little question is gold.

It trains discrimination.

Seeing the difference between things that look similar.

Yes, it feels harder.

Yes, you make more mistakes while you practice.

Desirable difficulty, remember?

Harder practice, stronger learning.

Tool number four, invented by Richard Feynman,

a Nobel Prize physicist.

And it fits in one sentence.



If you cannot explain it simply,

you have not understood it.

The method has four steps.

Choose a concept.

Explain it out loud,

as if you were talking to a five-year-old child.

Simple words, short sentences, real examples.

And listen to yourself while you do it.

The exact moment you hesitate,

or hide behind a complicated word.

Congratulations, you just found a gap in your knowledge.

Go back to the material,

repair only that gap, and explain again.

When the explanation flows like water,

the concept is yours.

Teaching is not what comes after learning.

Teaching is the learning.

And two quick bonus tools before we change gears.

Bonus one, mind maps.

Put the main idea in the center of a page,

and let branches grow from it.

One keyword per branch, colors, small drawings.

Building the map forces your brain to organize the ideas.

And organization is memory.

Bonus two, change your study locations.

Because your brain secretly records the room,

the light, the sounds, together with the information.

Review the same material in different places.

And each place becomes a hook

that can pull the memory back.



More hooks, more ways to remember.

Quick GPS, friends.

Two libraries.

And the goal is moving knowledge

from the fragile one to the automatic one.

The fuel, your fifth why.

The toolkit.

Active recall, spaced repetition with five boxes,

mixing your topics, and explaining like a physicist.

That system can learn anything.

Driving rules and accounting, piano.

And now, let's point it at English.

Because English, friends,

is the perfect student for this system.

Remember Daniel on the bus?

Six years of English, studied like the failed driving test.

Reading grammar explanations again and again.

Recognizing thousands of words, but producing very few.

Library one, full.

Library two, empty.

So this is the plan.

Tool by tool.

Active recall for English.

When you use flashcards, answer before you flip.

Even better, answer out loud.

Your mouth needs the practice more than your eyes.

And when you reread a transcript,

cover the translation first.

Make your brain fight for the meaning.

Spaced repetition for English.



Five to eight expressions per episode, never 50.

Review them tomorrow, in three days, in a week.

And if the boxes sound like too much work,

the flashcards on our website

do the spacing for you automatically.

Enter leaving for English.

Do not study one thing for one hour.

Mix inside the same session.

10 minutes of listening, 10 of vocabulary, 10 of shadowing.

And mix your tenses when you practice.

One sentence about yesterday, one about tomorrow,

one about right now.

Your brain has to choose the grammar every single time.

Exactly like in a real conversation.

Because real conversations never come in blocks.

And the Feynman method for English, this one we love.

Choose something you know very well.

Your job, your city, your favorite food.

And explain it in English, out loud,

to an imaginary friend, in the simplest words you have.

Where you get stuck, that is not failure.

That is your personal vocabulary list for this week.

No teacher can find your gaps better than your own voice.

Now wait, because I know what some of you are thinking.

Last episode you told us about the focus chair.

One place, only English.

And now you say, change locations?

Great question.

And both things are true.

The focus chair is for deep learning.



When something is new and needs all of your attention.

The different places are for review,

once the material already lives in your head.

Learn in your chair.

Review everywhere, flashcards on the bus,

shadowing in the kitchen,

your five expressions in the supermarket queue.

Deep work in one place, memory hooks in many.

The chair builds the memory, the world keeps it alive.

And where does all of this lead?

To one very specific moment.

One day someone asks you a question in English

and you answer, not translated.

Not prepared.

You hear your own voice, already speaking,

before you even decided to speak.

That friends is procedural memory.

That is library two, opening its doors.

Grammar you no longer think about.

Words that arrive by themselves.

Like the bicycle.

Your English will simply keep the balance.

So here is your mission for this week.

Pick five expressions from this episode's

vocabulary list on the website.

Make them flashcards or use ours.

And answer out loud before you flip.

Review tomorrow in three days and in a week.

And one evening explain one idea from this episode.

In English to your imaginary friend.



15 minutes a day.

Engineered like a scientist.

Because from today,

you are not just a student of English.

You are the engineer of your own learning.

Before we go, one last reminder.

Everything for this mission is waiting

at yourenglishtoolbox.com.

This episode with its interactive transcript.

Translations in Farsi, Spanish, German and French.

Vocabulary lists, flashcards that space the reviews

for you, mini games and PDFs you can download.

All free, all made for you.

Thank you for being here with us friends.

See you at yourenglishtoolbox.com.

Bye for now.

Take care friends.

