

Tip # 6 Video

Hi, this is Kristin Dodds, one of the directors of Learn Real English and I'm going to talk about Rule #6. Rule #6 to speak excellent English. So what is Rule #6? Rule #6 is to use real English materials. We've mentioned before that you should stop using textbooks. In fact, in Rule #2, Joe even talked about burning your textbook, burning your grammar books. So if you can't or if you don't study English from a grammar or textbook, how can you study English?

How can you learn English without a grammar textbook? By using real materials. Now what do I mean by real materials? Well, I mean real materials for native speakers, or materials similar to what native speakers would use. For example, if you like to read, and I highly recommend that. Reading is very good for learning English. If you like to read and you're going to read English, don't read textbooks. Don't read textbooks. Make sure that you find something that's easy enough to read and read something such as an English storybook. Or an English novel, just make sure that you pick something that's interesting to you...that you like.

Also, for listening, and if you'll remember we've talked about how listening should be 80% of your learning. Don't listen to textbook CDs. Don't listen to people acting out a dialog as if they're talking in a real conversation. Why? Why would you not want to listen to a textbook CD or listen to actors acting out a dialog? Because it's not real normal English. You want to listen to people who are speaking naturally, normally. A great example are podcasts. Now, you can either listen to a podcast about English or find a podcast that is about a topic that you really enjoy or you're really interested in. Could be a podcast about adventures or whatever...motorcycles, whatever you have an interest in.

Also, audiobooks are a great way for listening to real English. What is an audiobook? An audiobook is someone who is reading a book. So you're basically just listening. You're not reading the book. You're just listening to the book. So here again, that's a great way for you to find a book that interests you and just get the audiobook. Just listen.

Now for the same, what I had said about reading materials, real English reading materials...it's the same for listening. Make sure that they're easy enough, that the listening materials are easy enough. I mentioned in Rule #3 with AJ that you want to be able to understand 95% of what you listen to. This is very important. So make sure that they're easy enough. And make sure that they're interesting enough, that you really enjoy what you're listening to or what you're reading.

Now you may have to start with a child's audiobook, and that's okay. Because again, you want to make sure that you're understanding 95% of it. So whatever you start with, just listen, listen, listen, listen, listen until it becomes easy enough to where you can advance to a little bit higher level. For example, after reading or listening to children's audiobooks, then maybe you could go up to the next level of what a teenager or young adult would be reading or listening to. And then after that, you listen, listen, listen, listen, listen and when it becomes easy enough you can advance to another level.

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An advanced level would be listening to the news, such as CNN or the BBC. Also listening, watching, listening to movies in English, American movies, British movies, Australian movies. Another great example would be watching TV shows, listening to TV shows. And again that would be at an advanced level.

Now, as I've been saying this whole time, just make sure that you are using real materials. Not textbook materials. With real materials you get real spoken English. This is the English that we use. Textbooks don't teach real English. Textbooks teach real, or not real, textbooks teach formal English. They really basically teach written English. It's formal. It's written English. The vocabulary, the style, they're all for writing. When you listen to real English materials, you're listening and learning to real English, the English that we really use in day-to-day normal conversations. That's how we really speak. That's how we really pronounce things or words that we use. That's the real pronunciation.

So just remember, real materials only...only real materials, not textbooks, not textbook CDs. This is a really simple basic rule and it's a fun rule. It's a fun rule because it allows you to go out and find things that interest you. I mean let's face it, textbooks are not interesting. They're boring. So find real listening and real reading materials that interest you and are easy enough. And what's great, too, about the internet now...it's very easy to find a lot of these materials. Just do a Google search and you'll find plenty of podcasts. In fact, if you keep getting our e-mails, we'll tell you how to find real materials such as podcasts and easy listening.

Alright, so that's it for Rule #6 and tomorrow will be the last rule, Rule #7. So I hope you enjoyed listening. See you next time. Bye.