



## 821. ChatGPT & Learning English PART 1

Hello everyone,

Welcome back to my podcast for learners of English around the world.

I hope you are doing well today and that you are ready for this epic episode, which is called **ChatGPT and Learning English**.

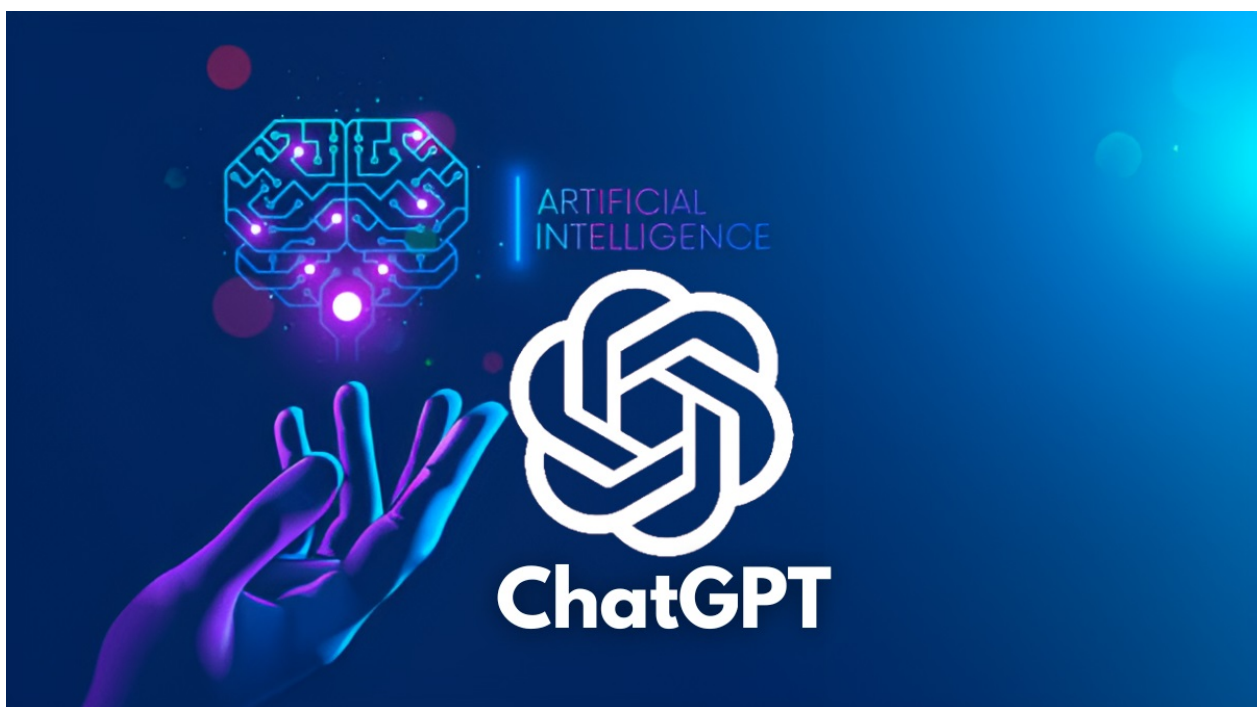
Yes, it's time for me to talk about ChatGPT, just like everyone else this year! Everyone's been talking about it. Now it's my turn. It's taken me a while to get round to doing this, but here it is.

There are absolutely loads of ways ChatGPT can be used. We are all discovering just how useful this is.

There have also been lots of discussions going on about how it might change the world, for better or worse.

People have been raising ethical questions about things like whether it is a form of plagiarism, whether it will encourage and enable cheating and other issues.

I'm going to focus here on learning English, mainly.



ChatGPT is basically an extremely sophisticated AI (Artificial Intelligence) chat bot developed and run by a company called OpenAI.

It's free for anyone to use. Just create an account at OpenAI and then go to <https://chat.openai.com/chat> and you can start.

You just type in your prompt or question and away you go.

***How do people use ChatGPT?***

I asked it that question. Let's see what it said.



Most people use ChatGPT to ask questions and seek answers on a wide range of topics.

As an AI language model, ChatGPT can provide information, explanations, and guidance on a variety of subjects, such as science, technology, history, culture, and more.

People may also use ChatGPT for language learning, writing assistance, and brainstorming ideas. Additionally, ChatGPT can be used for entertainment purposes, such as generating jokes, riddles, or trivia questions.

Overall, people use ChatGPT as a helpful tool for obtaining information, learning new things, and solving problems.

I'm recording this episode in March 2023 and I'm talking about ChatGPT3, which as the name suggests is the third iteration of this software, released by OpenAI in November 2022. This is the version that has got everyone talking.

## What is OpenAI?

This is the company that has created ChatGPT.  
According to Wikipedia, OpenAI is:

“... an American artificial intelligence research laboratory consisting of the non-profit OpenAI Incorporated and its for-profit subsidiary

corporation OpenAI Limited Partnership. OpenAI conducts AI research with the declared intention of promoting and developing a friendly AI.”

- Non-profit laboratory
- For-profit subsidiary corporation
- Research “...with the declared intention of promoting and developing friendly AI”

Declared intention → Interesting wording!

That seems to suggest that there are also undeclared intentions, doesn't it?

Does this mean that they have other intentions that they're not declaring, like maybe developing “unfriendly AI”, and what would that be like?

Would it just be rude to you if you asked it a question?

Like if you ask it,

*“Can you recommend some good mystery stories to help me learn English?”*

and it just says...

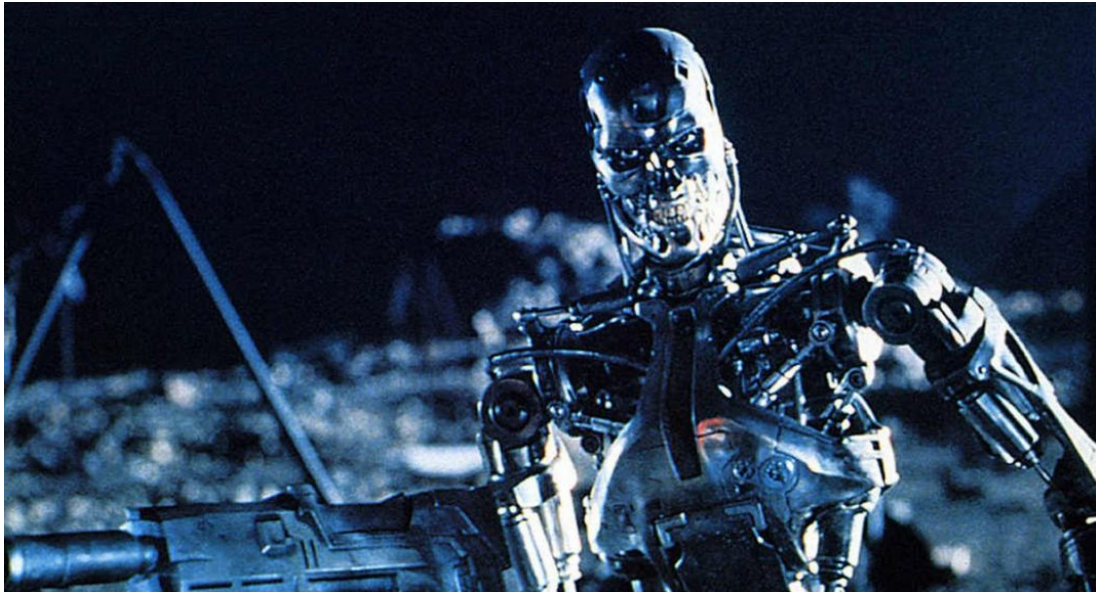
“No. What do you think I am, Google? Go and find out for yourself, and don't ask such me stupid questions, human.”

That would be unfriendly AI.

And that's probably the best case future scenario for “unfriendly AI” isn't it? Just a rude and unhelpful chatbot.

Of course unfriendly AI could end up being a lot worse than just that.

It could be... I don't know... Terminators.



But don't worry, because thankfully, this is not the case and they are developing "friendly AI".

So, everything is ok. I hope.

## **Am I a bit cynical or suspicious about this?**

Forgive me if come across as slightly suspicious, cynical or even paranoid about this kind of thing, but I have to admit that when I read about companies like OpenAI that develop artificial intelligence products like ChatGPT or robotic developers like Boston Dynamics (you know the ones that make those vaguely terrifying robots)



and things like that, when I read about those things, it does make me feel like I'm living in a dystopian science fiction film or something. Just a little bit.

It all has that kind of "dark sci-fi" atmosphere to it.





But no, this technology is not evil of course, yet, probably.

I suppose it depends who is in charge of it and all sorts of other things, but having watched so many of those science fiction films, well, I can't help feeling slightly alarmed or at least uncomfortable to some extent.

But of course those are just films and companies like Open AI are in no way similar to the fictional corporations in those films. Not similar at all.

## About

OpenAI is an AI research and deployment company. Our mission is to ensure that artificial general intelligence benefits all of humanity.



Look at their website - <https://openai.com/>

It is decidedly non-scary. It's all nice with friendly people sitting around smiling and chatting and lots of green plants in the background and it's all natural and sunny and safe.

"Safe" is definitely a key word on their website.

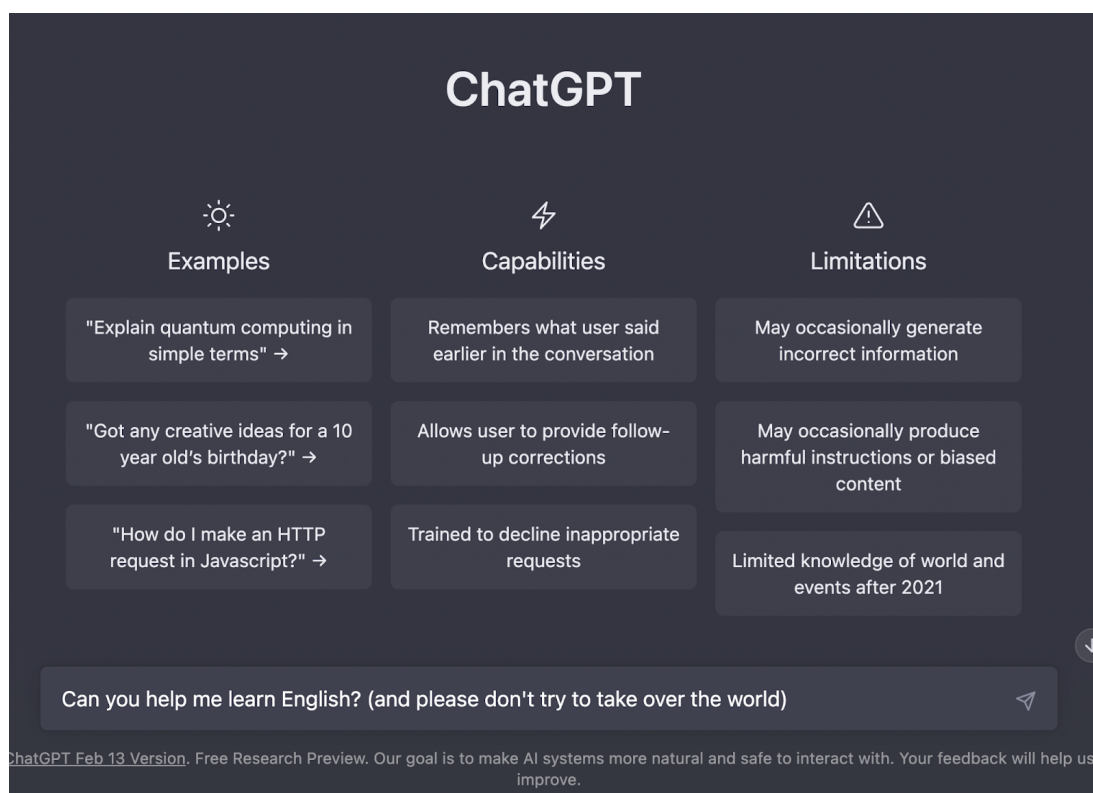
They really want us to know that they are making sure their projects are definitely *safe* and *friendly* and *beneficial to humanity*. No need to worry! We're making it *safe*. 😊

<https://chat.openai.com/chat>

Anyway, this episode is supposed to be about how ChatGPT can help you learn English, and whether or not it will make me (and countless other people) completely redundant and unemployed.

**So, let's get back to the point:**

# ChatGPT and Learning English



Despite my ironic comments about science fiction films, I am fascinated by ChatGPT and the way it can be used as a tool.

The potential is huge. Its use as a language learning assistant is only the tip of the iceberg really.

The more you play with it the more you realise what it can do, depending on the prompts that you give to it. You also realise its limitations and how it sometimes gets things completely wrong.

For example, the other day I was asking it random questions and I asked it this:

*Who is the most famous guest ever to have appeared on Luke's English Podcast?*



Luke's English Podcast has featured several notable guests over the years, including language experts, comedians, and writers. One of the most famous guests to have been interviewed on the podcast is probably David Crystal, a renowned linguist and author who has written extensively on the English language. Crystal has appeared on the podcast multiple times, discussing topics such as accents and dialects, the history of the English language, and language change and variation. Other notable guests who have appeared on Luke's English Podcast include comedian Eddie Izzard, author and journalist Jon Ronson, and language teacher and author Scott Thornbury. However, it's worth noting that the popularity and fame of a guest can be subjective and depend on factors such as personal interests and cultural background.

So it does often get things completely wrong.

That is something to bear in mind.

## Useful ChatGPT Prompts

Chat GPT is basically a chat bot. It works like you're having a conversation with it, in text form.

You write **prompts** into the chat box and then get responses as if it is a person writing back to you.

Usually these **prompts** are in the form of questions to request information or to ask ChatGPT to do things.

*What time is it?*



What time is it right now?



I'm sorry, but as an AI language model, I don't have access to real-time information. However, you can easily check the current time by looking at a clock, a watch, or by searching for "current time" on the internet.

So basically:

I can't tell you the time because I don't know and anyway I'm above that kind of thing. Just consult some of your 20th century technology and don't bother me with such petty simple requests.

### **Prompt:**

*Can you give me some tips on how to make my podcast introductions shorter?*



Can you give me some tips on how to make my podcast introductions shorter?



Absolutely! Here are some tips for making your podcast introductions shorter:

1. Get straight to the point: Instead of starting with a lengthy introduction, get straight to the topic of your podcast. Your listeners will appreciate the brevity.
2. Use a template: Create a template for your introduction that includes all the necessary information, such as the name of your podcast, the episode number, and a brief summary of the topic.
3. Cut out unnecessary information: Be selective about the information you include in your introduction. If it doesn't add value to your podcast or the topic you're discussing, cut it out.

4. Practice brevity: Challenge yourself to keep your introductions under a certain time limit. You'll be surprised how much you can say in just a few sentences.
5. Record separately: Consider recording your introduction separately from the rest of your podcast. This allows you to focus on delivering a concise introduction without feeling rushed.

Remember, your podcast introduction sets the tone for your entire episode, so make it engaging, informative, and concise.

You can also enter imperative instructions, like this:

*Make a list of evil corporations in science fiction films*



make a list of evil corporations from science fiction films



1. Weyland-Yutani Corporation from the "Alien" franchise
2. Umbrella Corporation from the "Resident Evil" franchise
3. Tyrell Corporation from "Blade Runner"
4. Cyberdyne Systems Corporation from "Terminator" franchise
5. OCP (Omni Consumer Products) from "Robocop" franchise
6. InGen Corporation from "Jurassic Park" franchise
7. Buy n Large Corporation from "WALL-E"
8. The Federation from "Starship Troopers"
9. Soylent Corporation from "Soylent Green"
10. BnL Corporation from "Moon"
11. Oscorp Industries from "Spider-Man" franchise
12. Shinra Electric Power Company from "Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children"
13. The Tyrell Corporation from "Total Recall"
14. Rekall Incorporated from "Total Recall"
15. The Mega Corporation from "Beneath the Planet of the Apes"
16. Veridian Dynamics from "Better Off Ted"
17. WOPR (War Operation Plan Response) from "WarGames"
18. OmniCorp from "RoboCop" (2014)
19. The Company from "Firefly" and "Serenity"
20. Massive Dynamic from "Fringe".

So, as I go through this episode I'll be using various **prompts**. If you are looking at the notes/transcript on the page for this episode on my website or while watching the YouTube version, you will see all the prompts I'm using written *in italics*.

### **Tip: Writing prompts for ChatGPT**

It's quite important that you word your prompts carefully, and if you don't get the response you're looking for first time round, you should keep trying with more specific and detailed prompts in order to get the right response.

I'll show you some examples of this during the episode.

## **Specific Ways You Can Use ChatGPT to Learn English**

Let's look at some specific things you can do with ChatGPT to help with your English. I'll show you specific prompts that you can write into ChatGPT and I will give my comments about each response it gives.

## **Overview**

These are the things we are going to explore and assess during the episode.

- Ask it to create a study plan for you
- Ask it to correct your errors
- Use it for conversation practice

- Use it for practising English in different situations (e.g. job interview role plays)
- Ask it to create texts or dialogues to study with
- Ask it to help you with exam preparation (IELTS, FCE, CAE etc)
- Ask it for definitions of words, and synonyms, antonyms, and collocations
- Ask it about the etymology of words and phrases
- Ask it to help you remember words with mnemonics
- Ask it to transcribe things into phonemic script
- Ask it to convert things into different versions of English (i.e. between UK and US English, or other varieties)
- Ask it to help you with sentence stress, pausing, intonation etc
- Ask it to create grammar or vocabulary quizzes or tests
- Ask it to create text adventure games to help you learn English
- Ask it to adapt its English level (e.g. for low level reading)

## **Ask it to create a study plan for you**

*I am an upper-intermediate learner of English, currently stuck at the intermediate plateau. My main areas of weakness are listening, speaking and pronunciation. I want to speak with a British accent and I want to be completely fluent at a C1 level or higher. Can you create a step-by-step study plan for me?*



Yes, I can help you create a study plan to improve your listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills and reach a C1 level of fluency in English.

Here is a step-by-step study plan for you:

### Step 1: Improve your listening skills

- Listen to English language podcasts, news broadcasts, and audiobooks for at least 30 minutes a day.
- Try to watch English language TV shows, movies and videos without subtitles to help you develop your listening skills.
- Focus on understanding the overall meaning of what is being said, rather than getting stuck on individual words.

### Step 2: Improve your speaking skills

- Start speaking English every day, even if it's just for a few minutes. You can practice with a language partner, tutor or a language exchange program.
- Focus on fluency rather than accuracy at first, don't worry too much about making mistakes.

- Record yourself speaking and listen back to identify areas where you need to improve.
- Try to use vocabulary and grammar structures that you have learned in context, rather than simply memorizing them.

### Step 3: Improve your pronunciation

- Watch and listen to videos of native speakers and try to mimic their pronunciation.
- Practice individual sounds, such as vowel and consonant sounds, using resources like pronunciation apps, websites or audio resources.
- Work on intonation, rhythm and stress patterns in connected speech, which are important aspects of British accent.
- Take pronunciation classes or work with a speech therapist, if possible.

### Step 4: Build your vocabulary

- Learn new words every day and use them in sentences to help you remember them.
- Try to learn words in context by reading articles, books or watching videos in English.
- Use flashcards, vocabulary lists and apps to help you memorize new words.

### Step 5: Work on grammar and writing

- Study English grammar rules and practice them through exercises and quizzes.
- Write short paragraphs, essays, and emails in English to practice your writing skills.
- Get feedback on your writing from a tutor, teacher or language partner.

### Step 6: Take formal English language exams

- Take a C1 level English language exam such as the Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) to measure your progress and get certified.

Remember to stay motivated, practice consistently and have fun with the process of learning. Good luck!

That's all good advice. But as a teacher, I know that when I give advice like this to my students, there are always other questions, doubts and obstacles that the students have.

I wonder how ChatGPT would respond to these kinds of comments.

- But I don't have time to do all those things
- I can't understand that podcast that you shared with me, and it was too long
- I can't understand TV series without subtitles

- I don't have anyone to practise my speaking with
- You say "don't worry about making mistakes" but how can I improve if that doesn't matter?
- I try to copy native speakers, but who should I copy? Who has the best accent?
- I copy native speakers but I still can't lose my accent
- Can you recommend a good book or website to help me practise my grammar?
- If I write things in English, who can correct them for me?

Actually, I tried inputting those comments into ChatGPT and it did come back with some pretty useful and relevant advice. I won't share it all here because there isn't time, but you could try it if you like.

## Error correction

It can correct your errors. Just ask it to.

Write a sentence or enter a paragraph and it'll correct it.

Let's try that. Let's ask it to correct the errors in this comment which someone wrote on my website a few weeks ago.

*Can you correct the errors in this website comment please?*

*Hey Luke. How's it going? Hope u enjoy. I'm walk to this website. Very well, its so exactly for me. I'm listening and hear you podcast (british), tbh i really like british accent. It posh vibes! And i like it. Thankyou so much for learn (british) english with your podcast in comedian, story telling, etc*



Sure, here's the corrected website comment:

"Hey Luke, how's it going? I hope you're doing well. I've recently discovered this website and it's been a perfect fit for me. I've been listening to your podcast, and as a fan of the British accent, I really enjoy it. The posh vibes are great! Thank you so much for helping me improve my British English through your podcast which features comedy, storytelling, and more."

Let's ask it to explain the corrections it has made.

*Can you give explanations for the corrections you made?*



Certainly! Here are the explanations for the corrections I made:

1. "Hope u enjoy" --> "I hope you're doing well."

I changed this phrase because "hope u enjoy" is an informal and abbreviated way

of asking how someone is doing, which might not be appropriate in all situations. Instead, I replaced it with a more standard greeting that asks how Luke is doing.

2. "I'm walk to this website" --> "I've recently discovered this website"

"I'm walk" is grammatically incorrect. I replaced it with "I've recently discovered" to convey the same idea in proper English grammar.

3. "Very well, its so exactly for me" --> "it's been a perfect fit for me"

The original phrase is not grammatically correct and does not convey a clear message. I replaced it with "it's been a perfect fit for me," which expresses the idea that the website meets the writer's needs and expectations.

4. "I'm listening and hear you podcast" --> "I've been listening to your podcast"

"I'm listening and hear you podcast" is not grammatically correct, and it's not clear whether the writer is currently listening or has listened to the podcast in the past. I changed the phrase to "I've been listening to your podcast" to express that the writer is a regular listener.

5. "tbh i really like british accent" --> "As a fan of the British accent, I really enjoy it."

"tbh i really like british accent" is an informal and abbreviated way of expressing admiration for the British accent. I changed the phrase to "As a fan of the British accent, I really enjoy it" to express the same idea in more formal language.

6. "It posh vibes!" --> "The posh vibes are great!"

"It posh vibes!" is an incomplete sentence and not grammatically correct. I changed the phrase to "The posh vibes are great!" to convey the same idea in a complete and grammatically correct sentence.

7. "Thankyou so much for learn (british) english with your podcast in comedian, story telling, etc" --> "Thank you so much for helping me improve my British English through your podcast which features comedy, storytelling, and more."

The original phrase is not grammatically correct and does not convey a clear message. I changed it to "Thank you so much for helping me improve my British English through your podcast which features comedy, storytelling, and more" to express the idea that the writer is grateful for Luke's assistance in improving their British English through his podcast.

This is actually very impressive for a chatbot, although it doesn't provide the same level of detail in its explanations that I would as a teacher and of course a teacher can deal with questions, interpret what the learner wants/means, and adapt more organically while allowing the learner to practise their English communication skills in the process. But still, it's impressive.

## Use ChatGPT for conversation practice

- Can you practise having a conversation with it?
- Is it capable of having a proper, meaningful conversation?
- Can it provide the kind of conversation practice that you need for language learning?
- Can it pretend to be your English teacher or someone else?

Chatbots have always been very limited and quite annoying when it comes to having a normal conversation, because they just can't do it, frankly.

Let's see if ChatGPT has made big improvements in that area. Is it easy to chat to, or does it quickly become weird and unnatural?

I've chosen some questions which I think would be totally normal conversation starters (with humans).

Let's see if we can start a conversation with it, using these questions.

## Conversation starters

Let's input these and see if we can have a conversation in real time. (no screenshots, just a realtime chat here in a new window <https://chat.openai.com/> )

- *How are you?*
- *Have you been busy recently?*
- *What have you been up to?*
- *I've been listening to a podcast about The Beatles. Are you a fan of The Beatles by any chance?*
- *What's your favourite Beatles album?*
- *Who do you think is going to win the 6 Nations this year?*
- *Did you see the Scotland vs France rugby game at the weekend?*
- *Any idea what the weather will be like this weekend?*
- *My brother's birthday is coming up but I've got no idea what to get for him.*

It's better than previous chatbots but conversation is still limited.

## Ask it to pretend to be someone else

Conversation becomes a bit easier and more natural.

*Can you pretend to be Ringo Starr so I can have a chat with you?*

*How are you at the moment Ringo?*

## **Ask it to correct your errors while having the conversation**

*Can you pretend to be my English teacher, and correct my errors while we chat?*

It can continue the conversation and also correct your errors.

This works ok sometimes but, it doesn't pick up on all your errors and after a few responses it seems to forget to correct you.

It's a bit difficult to keep a conversation going with a chatbot that has no emotions or opinions. You have to carry the conversation quite a lot and, well, it's not the best conversationalist. It tends to switch into "information mode" where it just gives you Wikipedia-like responses.

E.g. If you try to talk about Premier League football, it will mainly explain what the premier league is, rather than sharing opinions on it. I said "Let's talk about the premier league". It asked me what my favourite team was. I said I didn't really have one but I liked Liverpool. I asked what it's favourite team was. It gave me the same old response "As an AI language model I don't have personal preferences or emotions..." and then proceeded to kind of lecture me about Liverpool FC, giving me a kind of summary of the club, like what you might read at the top of Liverpool's Wikipedia page.

So, it's not the best conversationalist. It's not bad, but it seems that sharing personal opinions or sharing our emotional reactions to things, is pretty vital in human conversation and since it can't do that, conversations with it fall a bit flat.

But it is fun to play around with it.

**I tried having a conversation with it in French (a language which I am learning, badly) and wanted to see if my experience was different from the point of view of a language learner.**

I found that it really helped. It was a good experience in terms of learning French.

Just trying to express myself in written French was a challenge, and this was good. I need these challenges in order to progress.

I asked it to correct my mistakes. It did it, and it felt *almost* like having a conversation with a person.

I didn't feel judged or stressed (as I often do when talking to a person) and I learned some correct phrases. I felt free to repeat certain things over and over again in order to practise, without judgement.

## **Ending**

This is where we are going to stop. This is the end of part 1. We will continue in parts 2 and 3.

I hope you're enjoying this so far and finding it useful as a way of considering how ChatGPT might be able to help you learn English, or how it might not.

This video is actually in 3 parts. I recorded all of this last week and it ended up taking me 3 hours to go through all the ideas I mentioned earlier, all the various ways you can use ChatGPT for learning English.

Parts 2 and 3 will be available very soon. If I have already published them by the time you watch this, you will find links for them in the show notes.

Also you can get the PDF of the script for this episode and for the other parts - with most of the things I am saying and all the ChatGPT prompts which I'm using. Check the show notes/episode description.

Coming up in part 2 I will be playing around with ChatGPT more and doing these things:

- Continuing to evaluate ChatGPT as a way of simulating natural conversations
- Seeing if it can pretend to be your English teacher and correct your errors and explain them
- Testing if it can pretend to be someone else, to make conversations more fun or interesting
- Checking how well it handles role plays in order to let you prepare to use English in specific situations
- Seeing if you can simulate job interview situations with it
- Asking it to create useful texts or dialogues for studying with
- Looking at exam preparation by asking it to provide sample written texts in response to FCE or CAE writing tasks

- Seeing if it can give you good advice for doing Cambridge exams
- Seeing if it can create reliable, useful exam practice tasks to help you prepare for IELTS

All of that coming up in part 2, which will be available soon or maybe now.

Personally I am finding it fascinating to experiment with ChatGPT and seeing what it can do, and wondering how it might change the world for better or worse.

There's no doubt that AI like this will increasingly become a normal part of lives as we move into the future. What will the effect of that be on society and the planet?

There are some fairly strong feelings about ChatGPT going around. I'm curious to know what you think about it, so leave your comments in the comment section.

I'll continue to discuss all these things and test ChatGPT further in upcoming episodes.

Thank you for listening or watching. If you enjoy my content, then share it with your friends, like and subscribe, leave a review on iTunes or wherever you listen to this, and consider signing up for my premium episodes to get vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation episodes with stories.

OK, I will speak to you again in part 2 of this, but until then - goodbye bye bye!

**End of part 1**