



More Questions of English & Listener Comments 🧑 Bits & Bobs 5 [957]

Hello! Welcome back to the Bits & Bobs series, in which we are dealing with various listener comments and answering questions about the world of English.

In this episode the plan is to deal with these things:

1. How many words have I ever used on this podcast?
How many words actually exist in the English language?
How many words does the average native speaker know?
How many words do I know?
How many words do you know?
How many words should you know?
- Some thoughts and advice about your vocabulary range in English.

2. Who are my top 10 countries? Who are my bottom 10?

Audience Data & A Featured Country

- Some more insights into the far flung countries where people listen to this podcast, including a focus on one particular place, where you might live, and also my top and bottom 10 countries.

3. Accents

- Some stuff about different regional accents.

On this podcast people often comment on how clear my RP British accent is, but I believe you also need to be familiar with the wide variety of different accents we have in English - not just standard British RP or General American.

I've done lots of episodes about accents in the past, but which ones are they?

4. Shadowing

- Some comments about the language learning technique of shadowing and an opportunity to do it yourself with this episode
- A chance to practise some sentence stress, pausing, and intonation with a funny speech from one of my favourite comedy films.

Comments & Error Corrections

- All of this comes via various comments from listeners and I will correct a few of their errors while I read them out.

So that is an overview of what's coming up on the podcast in this episode.

There is an episode PDF (link in the description) with the full episode notes that I am reading from here, and a detailed vocabulary list at the end.

That should be very helpful for all you dedicated learners of English out there.

You can use it to check what you have heard or to gather new words and phrases.

- Reminder: Set a 30 min timer for water
- Reminder: Sign up for LEP Premium for more of this kind of thing
- Reminder: Always look both ways when crossing the street
- Reminder: Always look on the bright side of life

1.How many words?

December 🙌



This is an interesting fact. I don't know exactly how accurate it is. Of course 7,680,000 means all the words I have ever used, including all the repeated ones. I wonder how many times I have said "the" or "have", for example.

What I would really like to know is how many individual words I have said (not repeated) on the podcast over the years. That would tell us the vocabulary range of this podcast.

Also, what about phrases - phrasal verbs, idioms, prepositional phrases, or indeed any combination of words which has a specific meaning of its own? What is the true vocabulary range of this show?

It would also be amazing to have a full glossary of every word I've used. I suppose it's called a dictionary, but I'd like an LEP

dictionary or LEPtionary if you will. That would be extraordinary as a kind of “target list” of vocab that all true LEPsters must know.

But yes, I often dream of having a database of all the words and phrases I have ever said. But I don’t know how I could get that.

Maybe one day I will be able to connect my RSS feed to some kind of AI and just let it create a full database of everything I have said, with an alphabetical list of words and phrases, with example sentences and definitions. That would be amazing.

Still, this comment made me think about vocabulary, how many words there are in English, how many words most native speakers know and use, and how many words you should know, and how to find out your vocabulary range.

So, here are some interesting facts, thoughts and advice in response to this comment. Hopefully, after you listen to this, you will get a better idea of these important considerations.

How many words are there in the English language?

It's difficult to determine the exact number of words in the English language because languages are always changing. However, here are some estimates.

Oxford English Dictionary

The Second Edition of the 20-volume Oxford English Dictionary includes 171,476 words that are currently in use, and 47,156 words that are no longer in use.

Merriam-Webster

Merriam-Webster estimates that there are roughly 1 million words in the English language, but suggests that the figure could be many millions.

Other estimates

Some other estimates put English vocabulary at about 1 million words, including words like Latin species names, scientific terminology, and jargon.

Other factors that make it difficult to count the number of words in English include:

Slang and jargon

It takes time for dictionaries to include new words, and slang and jargon are not included in dictionaries.

Inflected forms

Are inflected forms of a word, like "drive," "drives," and "drove," counted as one word or several separate words?

Multiple spellings

For example, there are twelve different words with the spelling "post" in Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged. Post has 12 homographs. Are these all considered to be different words? This is also common for other words like *set* which famously has the highest number of different meanings of any English word.

So, basically it's hard to work out how many words there are in English, and how many are actually in use, but it's a lot. Maybe a million.

How many do you need to know?

We can start to deal with that by asking another question.

How many words do most native English speakers "know"?

According to a study by The Economist, most adult native English speakers have a vocabulary of 20,000 to 35,000 words. Their active vocabulary is lower, and probably 10,000-20,000 but I have met some people who I think have way less than that, and others probably with more.

This does raise a side question about whether it is even good to know/use a lot of words.

Does your number of active words mean that you are better at communicating in English?

Not necessarily. Have you ever met someone who was so verbose that they came across as pretentious and also quite difficult to understand? Winston Churchill was known to be a great speechmaker and communicator, but one of his strengths was the simplicity of his language.

"Short words are best, and old words when short are best of all."

This is perhaps his most famous quote on word choice. He understood that while English has a vast vocabulary, simplicity often leads to greater understanding.

How many words do you know?

You might want to know how many words you know in English and there are several tests to help you work it out, but to be honest I think the information from these tests is mostly useless to you.

What does “knowing a lot of words” indicate? Does it mean you are good at English?

You might know a lot of words but still not be able to fluently hold down a conversation or understand what people are saying. Vocabulary is only useful if you can apply it to your use of English. English is about what you can do, not only what you know.

What does it mean to “know a word”?

Does it mean recognising it as a word that exists?

Does it mean having a general idea of the meaning of the word when its used in context?

Does it mean you can define it? Does it mean that you know the translation into another language? Does it mean you can pick it correctly in a multiple choice exercise?

Does it mean you can recall the word independently?

Does it mean you can fluently recall and say or write the word at the right time, in the right way, getting the effect that you wanted?

To be honest, it is all of those things. But then again, your vocabulary is like an iceberg.

There are loads of words under the surface that you might know, recognise, understand, identify when both written and spoken, but you might not actually use them all the time when you speak or write (passive vocab).

This is like the huge iceberg under the surface.

People often talk about passive vocabulary in negative terms, suggesting that passive vocab is way less important than active vocab, and maybe they have a point, but we should not underestimate the importance of passive vocabulary. It plays a huge role in basically keeping our English afloat. You need that foundation of “background English” in order to function - to understand, to work things out from context, to keep up, to have a sort of subconscious sense of the language as a whole.

But of course active vocabulary is the part of the iceberg which is revealed above the surface, and this is vital of course - for your fluency, your ability to function in English.

I think it is important when learning vocabulary to try to push your active vocab, by not only understanding new words but trying to use them a few times.

The more you do this, the more likely you are to retain words actively and be able to use them again later, but also I think you stand a better chance of holding onto those words passively too.

This is all a bit of a ramble about vocabulary here, and how many words you should know, how you can know them, the different ways we “know” words and how to approach learning vocabulary.

Another question is, how many words do you expect to know in English?

What do you consider an acceptable number of words to know?

This raises questions about what level you expect to have, what level you should have, whether your English needs to be or should be the same as a native speaker of English.

Maybe it will never be the same as a native speaker (in all honesty, this is probably the case if you are learning English as a second or other language in adulthood)

but maybe that is absolutely fine because non-native level English can also be impressive, effective and powerful.

The point about this is that expecting a certain unachievable level can actually be damaging to you because you set a standard and if you don't reach it you just see failure.

So watch out for that, and instead just try to be your best, and know your limitations.

By the way "native speaker" is not a language level. There are loads of native speakers who are terrible at English, and I include the ones who do business with people from other countries and fail to adapt their English accordingly, and just confuse everyone.

I consider that "being bad at English" but of course it's more than that - there are loads of people who are native English speakers who are just plain bad users of the language - not just because they make mistakes, but because they are not clear, they are not applying important communication skills, they don't use the right words at the right time, they don't have control over the language, and more.

As a learner of English I think it's best to focus on being able to do as many things in English as possible - focus on practical

achievements, rather than some paper-based theoretical measure of your level. Stop worrying about it and start using English and focus on real world successes and failures (and how to learn from them) using English as a communication tool.

Sure, you might need to get a certain IELTS score, but that is basically a hurdle you have to jump over in order to get into a university, get a certain job or live in a certain country, and anyway - in theory - being good at English in the ways I described should result in getting a good IELTS score, because it is actually a pretty well designed test.

Nevertheless, if you really want to find out how many words you know in English, you can use the Preply test online which can be a relatively quick way to get an estimation of that number.

It's a two-step test that starts with 40 words to determine your approximate level, then shows you about 120 words in four columns.

You just tick the words that you know. How do you know the word?

Can you honestly give at least one definition of each word? If you can't say what the word actually means, then you don't know it.

You have to be completely honest because otherwise, what is the point?

The Preply test is the quickest one 👉

<https://preply.com/en/learn/english/test-your-vocab>

Also 👉 **Cambridge University**: An online vocabulary test (it's a level check actually, including grammar and bits of social english) Could be interesting for an episode of the podcast at some point.
<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/test-your-english/general-english/> There's also a business English one which would perhaps be more useful.

University of Wellington: A vocabulary test that is also available in PDF format (but it is complicated to interpret the instructions and carry out the test)
<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/resources/paul-nations-resources/vocabulary-tests>

Remember: The average adult native English speaker knows between 20,000 and 35,000 words, and they only actively use about 20,000 of them.

I took the test and got about 31,000 words.

Knowing this number doesn't really change anything for me.

More advice for you

I asked Google Gemini for more information about this and it gave me the following. So, some of this is Gemini, and some of the comments are from me.

How Many Words Are Needed?

There's no single "magic number" for fluency, as it depends on individual goals and how "word" is defined (e.g., counting word families vs. individual forms - knowing an entire word family (e.g.

teach, taught, teacher, teaching) - does that mean you know 4 words or just one?

However, here are some general estimates tied to common proficiency levels:

For English Learners

- **Survival/Basic Communication (A1-A2 CEFR):**
 - **Active:** ~500-1,500 words. With around 500 words, a learner can manage very simple conversations and everyday situations (introductions, basic needs). Around 1,000-1,500 words allow for basic sentence formation and understanding simple texts.
 - **Passive:** Likely a bit larger, perhaps 1,000-2,500 words.

By the way, if you want to know the most important words to know in English, there are several lists, published by Oxford. These include the Oxford 3000 which basically covers the A1-B2 range of levels, and the Oxford 5000 which goes up to C1.

There is also the really useful Oxford Phrase List, which shows the most important phrases to know. This is brilliant because when you consider that English is a very phrasal language, suddenly the number of vocabulary items you need to know, rises significantly.

Perhaps it is wrong to measure English by the number of words it has, and instead you should see English as a system of phrases, which have their own distinct meaning, and this then covers things like “used to” or “get used to doing” and all the prepositional

phrases, phrasal verbs and idioms we have. This is really important, isn't it?

Oxford Word Lists

<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/wordlists/>

- **Conversational Fluency (B1-B2 CEFR):**

- **Active:** ~2,000-3,700 words. At B1, learners can talk about work, social life, travel, and express opinions. At B2, they can discuss more complex topics, understand most news and articles, and participate in everyday conversations. (I am skeptical about that tbh)

Many sources suggest that **3,000 common words make up about 95% of daily English conversations.**

But this also shows us that getting truly advanced English means going beyond this pool of common words and phrases, and expanding your knowledge to include the more obscure and less frequent words.

- **Passive:** ~3,000-5,000 words or more. To understand most conversations and general written texts, a passive vocabulary in this range is usually sufficient.

- **Advanced/Professional Fluency (C1-C2 CEFR):**

- **Active:** ~4,000-10,000 words. At C1, learners can use English naturally in various settings (work, school), understand long and complex texts, and discuss abstract topics. C2 implies near-native fluency across

almost all topics, including idioms and advanced grammar.

- **Passive:** ~5,000-20,000+ words. For a C2 level, a passive vocabulary of around 10,000-20,000 words is often cited for understanding literature, academic texts, and a wide range of content.

For Native English Speakers:

- **Average Native Speaker:** Estimates vary widely depending on how a "word" is counted, but typically range from **25,000 to 35,000+ words**.
- **Everyday Usage:** Interestingly, native speakers often only use about **1,000 to 3,000 words in everyday conversations**, highlighting that a smaller, well-used active vocabulary is highly effective.
- **Passive Vocabulary:** Native speakers' passive vocabulary is significantly larger, potentially 5 times their active vocabulary or more, reaching tens of thousands of words.

Key Advice for Learners:

1. **Focus on High-Frequency Words First:** Learning the most common 800-3,000 words will give learners a significant comprehension boost (often 75-95% of everyday English).

Several things to consider - you have to know how words sound in fluent speech, and again, knowing words is only part of the puzzle - for example, in listening, you need to know how these words combine with other words in sentences in fluent speech.

If you just spend your time memorising the words in the Oxford 3000 list for example, you might not recognise them when listening to people actually speaking English.

So, don't forget the real world practical situations in which English is used and remember that words exist within a spoken system, which includes pronunciation - connected speech, word stress, weak forms of vowel sounds etc.

Basically - keep listening and reading a lot, and be mindful of the way words are incorporated within those systems.

2. **Prioritise Active Use:** While passive exposure (reading, listening) is crucial for building passive vocabulary, learners should actively practice using new words in speaking and writing to move them into their active vocabulary. This requires deliberate practice.
3. **Context is King:** You should try to acquire words in context (sentences, dialogues, real-life situations) rather than just memorising isolated words.
4. **Don't Obsess Over Counting:** Emphasise practical communication and understanding over hitting a specific word count. The ability to use words effectively is more important than the sheer number of words you know.
5. **Identify Personal Goals:** The number of words needed varies based on a learner's objectives (e.g., travel, academic study, professional use). Remember to tailor your vocabulary

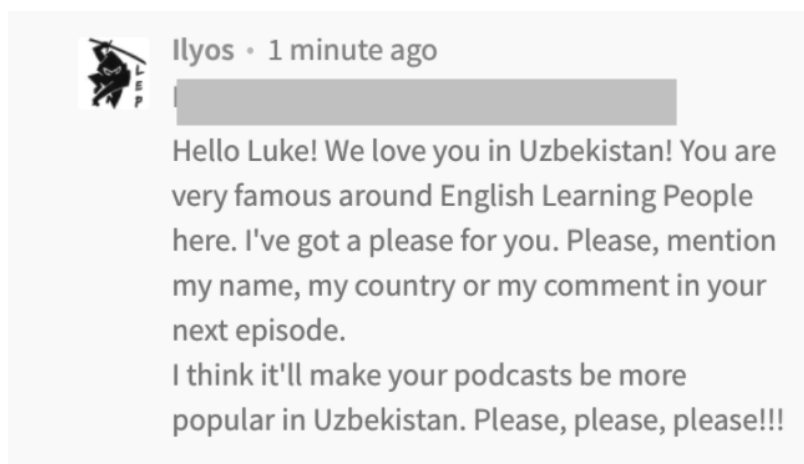
learning to your specific needs.

6. **Be Patient and Consistent:** Building a strong vocabulary takes time and consistent effort. It's a continuous process, so enjoy the ride and listen to Luke's English Podcast every day, haha.

By understanding these distinctions and focusing on strategic vocabulary acquisition, you can make efficient progress towards your fluency goals, one of which should be to expand your range of active and passive vocabulary in English.

2. UZBEKISTANI Listeners - **ASSEMBLE!**

Uzbekistan is my featured country in this episode, after I received this comment on my website some time ago.



Shout out to **Ilyos** and the people of Uzbekistan, currently in 54th position in the leaderboard of locations for my podcast audience.

Quite a lot higher up the table than Paraguay (from the last “Bits & Bobs” episode I did - part 3, last year).

47. Algeria
48. Morocco
49. Belgium
50. Myanmar (Burma)
51. Philippines
52. Azerbaijan
53. Portugal
54. Uzbekistan
55. Georgia
56. Kuwait
57. Denmark
58. Bangladesh
59. Macao
60. Chile
61. Qatar

A few facts about Uzbekistan (today's featured country)

Uzbekistan /ʊzˌbɛkɪˈstɑːn, -ˈstæn/ officially also the **Republic of Uzbekistan**, is a doubly landlocked Central Asian Sovereign state.

It is a secular, unitary (not divided into federal states) constitutional republic, comprising 12 provinces, and a capital city. Its capital city is Tashkent.

Uzbekistan is bordered by five landlocked countries. Can you name them?





Kazakhstan to the north;

Kyrgyzstan to the northeast;

Tajikistan to the east/southeast;

Afghanistan to the south;

and Turkmenistan to the southwest.

Fun facts about Uzbekistan

<https://www.transfergo.com/about-uzbekistan>

Uzbekistan is double landlocked

Yes, you read correctly. Not only is Uzbekistan a landlocked country, but the countries that surround it are also landlocked. This means that to reach a coastline from Uzbekistan, you'll need to pass through at least two other countries. It does have a coast on the Aral Sea - but this is technically an inland lake, and not an ocean.

Quiz question

There is only one other double-landlocked country in the world.
Can you name it?

Answer: *Liechtenstein* is the only other country in the world to be double **landlocked**. It is bordered by Austria and Switzerland, both of which have no oceanic coastline.

Uzbekistan is big on cotton

Cotton is one of Uzbekistan's biggest exports. In fact, it accounts for 17% of the country's exports and its cotton makes up 4-5% of the world's overall production. This makes Uzbekistan the world's seventh-largest producer of this staple **textile**.

The country has some unusual **etiquette**

Like most countries, Uzbekistan has some unusual etiquette unique to the country. One of these is that handshakes are only acceptable to take place between two men. If you're greeting an Uzbek woman, you should bow down to her with your right hand over your heart.

Another common etiquette is to run your hands over your face at the end of a meal to express gratitude.

Cradle of Astronomy

Ulugh Beg, a 15th-century ruler and astronomer from Uzbekistan, built one of the world's finest observatories in Samarkand. He

made remarkable advancements in astronomy, calculating the length of a year to within 1 minute of today's measurement.

Nice one 👍

You're probably curious about my top countries now, aren't you?

Which country (sorry, I mean "location") do you think is currently in the top spot?

Here is an overview of the top 10 locations for LEP at the moment.

This is just for the audio podcast. YouTube will have different data.

To be honest, I **take this with a pinch of salt** because I think some places use VPNs which might affect the data, and of course the data is **skewed** by population size.

And anyway - I love you all, wherever you come from and wherever you are right now.

As far as I am concerned, when you listen to this podcast you are all citizens of LEPland.

Sorry, *subjects* of LEPland because of course I am the king or maybe emperor of LEPland, but I'm a **benevolent** king of course (free ice-cream for children etc)

Current Top-10 Countries for LEP (audio)

- Taiwan 🇹🇼 *Nǐ hǎo*
- Japan 🇯🇵 *Kon'nichiwa*
- Saudi Arabia 🇸🇦 *mrhban*
- United Kingdom 🇬🇧 *Alright mate?*
- Germany 🇩🇪 *Hallo*
- United States 🇺🇸 *What's up?*
- Hong Kong 🇭🇰 *Nei hou*
- Turkey 🇹🇷 *Merhaba*
- Poland 🇵🇱 *Cześć (tchaish-ch)*
- Korea, Republic Of 🇰🇷 *ann-yeong-a-se-yo*

I love everyone else too, ok?

If you want your country to get into the top 10 - tell your friends!!
And if you can't listen for some reason (the podcast doesn't work in Apple Podcast etc) then LEP might have been blocked in your country. I believe it is currently blocked on Apple Podcasts in China, which is a pity.

By the way, these are my bottom 10 countries (with the one at the top being the bottom country, weirdly).

If you are in any of these places I want to give a very very special hello to you. I would love to know your story.

A combo of Carribean, African, South American and Pacific nations here, and a couple of northern islands too.

Locations

🔍 Search

Country



Guyana



Central African Republic



Palau



Samoa



Faroe Islands



Belize



Aruba



Suriname



Åland Islands



Bahamas

A first for a LEPster?

14 JUL AT 20:32



Hey Luke I'm a ninja

You accepted Aytach's request.

Not any more!

11:33

Hello Luke, today i'm listening to your podcast while i'm harvesting olives. In the podcast with your mom part 1 you mentioned that the most of the lepsters listening to you while using public transport. So i'm not one of them and maybe i'm the first lepster that listens to you in an olive yard. You should mention my name in your next podcast to prove that you are a real person and also if you need some olives just text me. Thanks for all.





Hello Aytach, (aituk)

Well, let me confirm that I am indeed a real person. Finally, with this reply, you have confirmation that I really do exist! If you can email me some olives, that would be great. Thanks.

Everyone else - Have you ever listened to me while in an olive field, or is Aytach really the first?

Listeners, do you ever listen to this podcast in an interesting situation?

Are you doing something interesting while listening right now?

Are you in an interesting location, doing something unusual?

Let me know by leaving a comment under this episode or by getting in touch luketeacher@hotmail.com

I want your stories, photos, comments and jokes!

Different Regional English Accents on LEP

460. Catching Up With Amber & Paul #6 (feat. Sarah Donnelly)

In this episode we spent some time speaking in different accents, especially northern Irish accents as Paul's Mum is from N. Ireland.

Sarah used to live in Belfast and I used to live in a house full of people from Belfast, so we have been exposed to quite a lot of Northern Irish accents over the years and generally love hearing them, and I have to say I really enjoy attempting to copy a Northern Irish accent (like I do with most accents) which I hope it not offensive in any way (it probably is somehow but that's not the intention).

“Mimicry is the sincerest form of flattery” as they say.

Anyway, we love different accents and I have a soft spot for Northern Irish accents.

Liam Neeson is from Northern Ireland, for example, which might be why I can't stop talking like him.

gregfalcon

While listening the episode I was absolutely fascinated by all those accent parodies the guys made.

Of course it's a bit of fun but also it's quite interesting for people who know only two particular accents from the English-speaking world - British and American.

I wonder if it's a good idea to make an episode dedicated to this theme. Like, choose the most popular (common) English accents from all over the world and the UK and explore them.

Imagine this curious theme supported by Luke's parodies! I remember a Scottish man speech in the Victorian Detectives episode (performed by Luke if I remember right) and that was just amazing.

How do you feel about the idea, LEPsters?

Luke, please, think about it.

Luke Thompson

Hi Greg (are you still listening? **Radio silence** from you in the last few years).

Actually, I've done a few episodes about accents, but it is always worth coming back to the subject in other episodes. So maybe I can do that again.

But check out these ones from the archives. They all involve different regional accents in some way - listening to examples of them, breaking them down, trying to copy them and explaining what cultural associations we have with them.

- [56. British Accents and Dialects | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [58. Scotland / Scottish Accents \(with Leslie\) | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [59. Billy Connolly Interview / Scottish Accent \(Glasgow\) | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [67. Cockney / London Accent | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [107. Messing Around with Accents and Voices \(with Kate Fisher\) | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [171. A Cup of Tea with Daniel Burt \(Part 2\) | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#) (Aussie accents)
- [Video: Playing Around with Accents in English](#)
- [279. Marcus Keeley / Northern Ireland / Accent \(Part 3\) | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)

- [404. British Accents in The Lord of the Rings \(Part 1\) | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [405. British Accents in The Lord of the Rings \(Part 2\) | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [422. Learning British Dialects with Korean Billy | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [427. British Comedy: Limmy's Show \(Part 1\) Mr Mulvaney | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [469. British Comedy: John Bishop | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [470. Understanding the Liverpool Accent | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [495. Australian Stereotypes and Cliches \(with Oliver Gee\) ~didgeridoo sounds~ | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [516. Paul McCartney's Spider Story \(Intensive Listening\) | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [575. British Comedy: Paul Chowdhry | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [584. Posh or not posh? \(Part 3\) with Amber & Paul | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [656. British Comedy: Karl Pilkington's Monkey News / The Ricky Gervais Show | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [657. \[1/2\] Why do Brits sing with American accents? | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)
- [682. Key Features of English Accents, Explained](#)

and more...

Check them out in the archive!

Shadowing

Wojciech Włodarczyk - "Voy-ch-yekh Vwo-dar-chick"

Luke: Are you the famous Polish champion volleyball player who won the ENEA Polish SuperCup 2014, the bronze medal of Polish Championship in 2015?

In fact - do I have any famous or noteworthy people listening to this podcast? Get in touch and let me know! Don't be shy!

Wojciech

Luke, have you ever heard about a very great method, which is called *shadowing*?

This is a very great method to improve your speaking skills, listening skills and pronunciation.

It involves reading a short text while listening to how a native speaker reads it.

This is a very practical exercise. I recommend this method to everyone.

Maybe it could be very helpful to do some shadowing on the podcast.

Luke

Yes, I have heard of shadowing and I have talked about it quite a lot on this podcast over the years. I encourage it a lot during premium episodes.

How to do shadowing to practise your English

There are several ways to do it. All you need is some speech with a text. There is also a way to do it without a text.

You could do it with any parts of my episodes that have scripts - introductions, stories, and especially *premium episodes* (StoryTime series).

Other options are TED Talks, British Council podcasts, BBC Learning English.

Option 1 - no script, no preparation, basic version

Just try to say what the other person is saying at the same time as them (or slightly behind them).

Try it! (I can perhaps demonstrate with a clip from a podcast I like). You can do this for quite a long time. Bear in mind that it might be important to check the script if there is one, to make sure you really

know what you're saying and you're not reinforcing things you misunderstand.

Option 2 - with script

1. Read the text. E.g. the script to a TED talk or one of my solo episodes. Take time to understand anything new to you.
2. Then read the text out loud. (this has a number of benefits on its own)
3. Then listen to the speaker reading it aloud.
4. Compare your version to the speaker's version. You could try recording yourself.
5. Then try to do it again after you have identified bits to work on.

Option 3 - listen and repeat, check the script

1. Take a short section of audio with a script.
2. Listen to it and use the script to help you understand everything.
3. Go back to the start of the section and listen to it again - *without the script*. As you listen, pause after each line, and repeat exactly what you hear, without looking at the script.
4. Then, check that line in the script and repeat it again.
5. Then read the script out loud.

Here's one you can use right now. Use whichever method you want.

3 Amigos - Our Own Personal El Guapo

Quick plot summary. The Three Amigos are actors from Hollywood. After a misunderstanding in which they thought they were being called to Mexico for a film shoot, they actually turn into real heroes and help the residents of a small Mexican village which is being terrorised by a group of bandits led by a man called El Guapo. One of the Amigos (Lucky Day) gives a motivational speech.



Someday
the people of this village
will have to face El Guapo.

We might as well do it now.

In a way,
all of us have an El Guapo to face someday.

For some,
shyness might be their El Guapo.

For others,
a lack of education might be their El Guapo.

For us...

El Guapo is a big dangerous guy
who wants to kill us.

But as sure as my name
is Lucky Day...

the people of Santa Poco...

can conquer their own personal El Guapo...

who also happens to be the actual El Guapo.

We want to defend ourselves. But how?

By using the skills
and the talents
of the people of Santa Poco.

This is not a town of weaklings.

You can turn your skills
against El Guapo.

Now...

what is it that this town
really does well?

We can sew.

There you go.
You can sew.

If only we had known about this earlier.



The Amigoes go on to use the sewing skills of the people of Santa Poco to defeat El Guapo and his gang of bandits.

Anyway...

This is the end of the Bits & Bobs series, for now... Maybe I will do another one when I have collected more bits & bobs.

I hope you have learned a thing or two, and perhaps got a bit of a motivational boost from the series, as well as a couple of laughs.

I will continue to save bits and bobs in my Google Drive when I find them (other cloud drives are available), so maybe in another 6 years I can continue the series.

But for now, I will wish you a **fond farewell** until next time.

Don't forget - check out the PDF for all the notes and stuff, and a massive vocabulary list at the end as well.

If you're still listening, perhaps leave a comment about your own personal El Guapo and how you could defeat it.

Or perhaps a fun fact about your country.

Or maybe your favourite older episode from the episode archive.

Until next time, good bye bye bye bye

Vocabulary List

skewed

Example: "The data is skewed by population size."

Definition: Not accurate or balanced; distorted. (adjective)

Comment: Often used when discussing statistics, studies, or opinions.

to take something with a pinch of salt

Example: "I take this with a pinch of salt."

Definition: To doubt the truth or accuracy of something. (idiom)

Comment: Colourful British idiom for critical thinking.

benevolent

Example: "But I'm a benevolent king of course..."

Definition: Kind and well-meaning; showing goodwill. (adjective)

Comment: A slightly formal but expressive adjective. Often used to describe leaders, gods, or systems.

a fond farewell

Example: "I will wish you a fond farewell until next time."

Definition: A warm and affectionate goodbye. (phrase)

Comment: A more literary or poetic alternative to "goodbye." Great for speeches or messages.

mimicry

Example: "Mimicry is the sincerest form of flattery."

Definition: The act of imitating someone's voice, behaviour, or mannerisms. (noun)

Comment: Good for discussing how people imitate accents or speech styles – especially in comedy or language learning.

to have a soft spot (for something)

Example: "I have a soft spot for Northern Irish accents."

Definition: A strong liking or fondness for something or someone. (idiom)

Comment: Adds emotional depth to descriptions. Very common in spoken English.

sew

Example: "We can sew."

Definition: To join or repair fabric using a needle and thread. (verb)

Comment: A simple verb here used in a humorous way – good for household/DIY vocabulary.

doubly landlocked

Example: "Not only is Uzbekistan a landlocked country, but the countries that surround it are also landlocked."

Definition: A country surrounded entirely by landlocked countries.
(adjective phrase)

Comment: Geography-specific term, useful in quizzes or fun fact discussions.

etiquette

Example: "Uzbekistan has some unusual etiquette unique to the country."

Definition: Social rules and customs for polite behaviour. (noun)

Comment: Important cross-cultural word. Can also be applied metaphorically (e.g., email etiquette).

secular

Example: "It is a secular, unitary constitutional republic."

Definition: Not connected with religion. (adjective)

Comment: Common in political and cultural discussions.

unitary

Example: "It is a secular, unitary constitutional republic."

Definition: A system of government where power is held by a central authority. (adjective)

Comment: Advanced vocabulary for learners interested in politics or geography.

radio silence

Example: "Hi Greg (are you still listening? Radio silence from you in the last few years)."

Definition: A period of no communication. (noun phrase, informal)

Comment: Originally military, now often used humorously in casual messages or emails.

shout out

Example: "Shout out to Ilyos and the people of Uzbekistan..."

Definition: A public expression of thanks or recognition. (noun)

Comment: Common in podcasts, YouTube videos, and live performances.

assemble

Example: "Uzbekistani listeners – ASSEMBLE!"

Definition: To come together in a group. (verb, imperative)

Comment: Used playfully here (like in superhero films). Also useful in formal writing or instruction.

fun fact

Example: "Fun facts about Uzbekistan..."

Definition: A short, interesting piece of trivia. (noun phrase)

Comment: Popular phrase in informal or educational contexts to introduce interesting info.

textile

Example: "Its cotton makes up 4–5% of the world's overall production of this staple textile."

Definition: A type of cloth or woven fabric. (noun)

Comment: Industry-specific term, common in trade and economics topics.
