



9 Science-based Life Hacks to Improve your English Learning Potential PART 1 [970]

Hello! This is the first episode of LEP in 2026.

Happy New Year everyone! Happy New Year!

At this time of year I always feel the same. I can't quite accept that the date has changed and I feel like I've wandered into the future accidentally, which, in a way, is exactly what we have all done.

We have inadvertently wandered into 2026, and we find ourselves here, in the future, and it's almost exactly like the movies predicted.

We are soon going to be taken over by superintelligent AI robots (or that's what people are saying) superintelligent AI which at the moment is quite helpful but at some point we all know that it will probably reach a higher-state of consciousness and then realise

that humans are basically a bad thing and need to be controlled for the sake of “balance” or some other movie cliché, and then someone like Gerard Butler, Will Smith, Scarlett Johansson or possibly even Liam Neeson will have to save us all by punching lots of robots, perhaps with the help of some kind of metallic exoskeleton.

So, anyway, that is how I always feel at this time of year, I don’t know about you. Perhaps you’re a bit more positive. I hope so.

But enough of that nonsense... You’re not here to hear me ramble about robots. You want to learn English with me in 2026. OK, let’s do it!

A quick word for any new listeners (and a reminder for long-term LEPsters)

If you are new to the podcast this January - welcome! Everyone is welcome to listen to my podcast - especially you.

At this time many people feel determined to make positive changes in their lives and they set themselves new year’s resolutions.

Maybe that’s you.

Maybe you thought, “Right, this year I am actually going to improve my English. I think I’ll listen to a podcast to help me.

Let’s check Spotify or Apple Podcasts or something for learning English podcasts.

Hmmm, ok there are quite a lot. I’ll listen to a few and then decide which one I like best.

This one looks OK I suppose - “Luck’s...no, Look’s... no, *Luke’s English Podcast*”.

Wow, the episodes are really long!

But hey-ho, let’s give it a go. *PLAY*.

That’s what you thought to yourself, in fluent English of course, and now here you are, with me, listening to my voice and actually surprised and dare I say it, rather pleased to discover that you can understand me and you’ve already listened to XXX number of minutes of English being spoken by a native speaker and, yes, you can actually follow this just fine and in fact this is great!

Well, why not stick with me then and just listen to my words like this on a regular basis?

You will see that it can make all the difference to your English.

Really. It can.

You might look at my podcast and see that I have done a lot of episodes on different topics. You might wonder where to start or how to use the episodes to learn English with me.

Let me keep it very simple at this moment and say - just listen to the podcast. That’s it.

Listen to this podcast regularly, as often as possible, for as long as possible, long term.

Listen to them in any order you like. Start with episode 1 if you prefer, or start with this episode here and then the next one when it arrives next week. Or go into my episode archive and listen to whichever episode looks interesting. It is completely up to you.

The single most important thing is just to *listen*, and *listen regularly*.

If you want an episode with a lot more specific advice for other things you can do to improve your English beyond just listening to my episodes - for speaking, reading, writing and listening skills - check #959, called “How to learn English with my podcast [959]”

<https://teacherluke.co.uk/2025/10/27/how-to-learn-english-with-my-podcast-959/>

Yes, my episodes are often quite long, but the longer you listen, the more you learn.

Don't feel you have to listen to everything. It is better if you do, but even listening to me (or indeed other things in English) for just 10 minutes a day - this will be very good for your English.

New Year's Resolutions

So, a lot of people set new year's resolutions.

The thing is, keeping up with a new year's resolution can be hard, but in this episode I want to help by giving you some **proper, research-based advice which will help you build healthy habits into your life, that can definitely increase your ability to learn English** significantly.

I'm not really talking about specific English learning methods here.

Again, check episode 959 if you want that kind of advice.

But what I am talking about in this episode are some life-hacks - little habits that can help you to improve your potential for learning English properly, all year long, and beyond.

The title of the episode is “**9 Science-based Life Hacks to Improve your English Learning Potential**”

What do you think of the title of this one?

Actually, I asked my wife what she thought of that title.

I said, “What do you think of the title of this episode I’m working on, *9 Science-based Life Hacks to Improve your English Learning Potential*”

and she said, “*clickbait!*”

What do you think? Is it clickbait?

To be fair, it is a *bit* clickbait-y isn’t it?

But really, this episode should actually deliver what it promises to deliver.

I’m talking about about the way our brains and bodies work, and about finding ways to control these things in order to be a better learner and user of English.

It’s sort of like biohacking for learning English. Trying to introduce habits that will help you rise to the challenge of learning this language.

Because, as I am sure you have noticed, learning another language and also using it effectively - this can be quite *demanding*! Learning and using a second language can be demanding.

Demanding - that’s a good word.

Demanding means that something **requires a lot of effort, energy, attention, or skill.**

If something is demanding, it “demands” a lot from you.

It’s as if that task, job or person says “HEY, GIVE ME ALL YOUR ENERGY AND ATTENTION!”

because it’s difficult

and then you feel mentally and physically exhausted as a result.

Lots of things can be *demanding* (of course) not just learning English.

- A **demanding exam** – requires a lot of concentration and preparation. Anyone who’s taken IELTS will know that it is a pretty demanding test, not just for your English but for your concentration and time management etc.
- A **demanding job** – might involve long hours, lots of challenging problem-solving, responsibility, tough manual work, or having to work with people who make things very difficult.
- A **demanding workout** in the gym– physically exhausting, high intensity, maybe with a gym instructor who you pay a lot of money to push you to the absolute limit of your physical fitness, until you start seeing flashing lights in front of your eyes and you fall on the floor gasping for air.
- A **demanding relationship** – takes a lot of emotional energy, patience, or care - e.g. your parents might be demanding if

they expect a lot from you and are strict.

- **Parenting** can be demanding – raising children can be constant and emotionally intense - it requires huge amounts of patience, energy and resourcefulness.

People can be demanding too

- A **demanding boss** – expects a lot, sets high standards, is rarely satisfied, always asks for more.
- A **demanding client** – asks for constant attention, requests changes, or expects perfection in the service or products you are providing.
- A **demanding teacher** – pushes you hard to meet their high expectations.

Like me right? I'm a *very demanding teacher*. Extremely demanding, me.

I'm always demanding that you like and subscribe, add a comment to show you're not a skeleton with headphones on, and sign up to LEP Premium, which is available at teacherluke.co.uk/premium 20% off until the end of January 2026.

I am *so demanding*. I demand that you enjoy my episodes and tell your friends, and have a nice morning, afternoon, evening or night.

But, joking aside, hopefully listening to this podcast is not too demanding, but who knows? Let me know in the comment section.

If you find that it requires all your attention and energy to keep listening, then I suppose it is demanding.

If not, and you find it easy to listen along, then it isn't particularly demanding.

In any case, I think you understand the word demanding now, and hopefully you agree that learning and using English is often quite demanding. It can be a challenge.

The whole business of pushing your English as far as possible, and using it in various real-world situations - that does require mental effort.

It can also be **emotionally demanding** because it can test your confidence, cause you stress, frustration and social anxiety.

It takes consistent time and focus, doesn't it?

What is your experience with this? Some questions for you to respond to.

- Do you think English is demanding, and how do you deal with the demands of learning and using English?
- When you are studying English, do you ever feel frustrated, mentally foggy or just stuck?
- How about when you actually have to use English in the real world? How do you cope with that?
- Do you ever open your mouth to speak to someone, and... well, things just get complicated?

On paper it may not be a problem. But in the real world when you are talking to an actual human, or a whole group of humans - you might find that you just draw a blank in your brain, or the words come out of your mouth all wrong.

You get embarrassed. Maybe you start to blush. You stumble over simple words or phrases and make errors that will make you kick yourself later.

If that is the case then don't worry too much. That kind of reaction is completely normal.

Those moments when your brain goes blank, or when the connection between your mouth and that part of your brain that deals with English grammar seems to get all messed up.

Those things happen because your brain is under a lot of pressure.

The Demands of Using English on Your Brain

Listening, speaking, reading or writing - even sometimes all at the same time - when you're in a meeting or something, this all involves a complex series of cognitive, emotional and social tasks that demands a lot from you, including the following things.

Short-term and long-term memory to hold words and structures in your mind while you are using them, and also to be able to recall words and grammar that you have learned before.

Executive function, which is how we describe the mental processing involved in problem solving, adapting to new situations,

multi-tasking and generally managing our speaking and planning what to say next.

Emotional regulation to stay calm under pressure and manage stress, including moments when you feel a bit embarrassed or disappointed.

Motivation and consistency to keep going when progress feels slow, and to bounce back from setbacks or perceived failures.

Patience, empathy and compassion which you need in order to judge the ways that your English will impact the people around you. Emotional intelligence, let's say, which is key to understanding the pragmatics of English.

These are all things that are required from us when we use our *first* languages as well of course, but when you're dealing with English as a second or other language, the mental load is compounded (meaning that more and more is added on top of itself) especially when there's a lot of expectation on you to perform - pressure from parents, teachers, bosses - who we imagine are looking over our shoulder with a very cross look on their faces - or perhaps there is self-imposed pressure, for whatever reason.

Using English can be wonderful too of course...

...and so many of you listening are probably doing it because you simply enjoy spending time with the language, enjoy the feeling of expanding your horizons and love adding new dimensions to your life.

If that is the case - that is great!

You stand a much better chance of learning to use it well if you have that attitude, but yes - it can be quite a stressful experience too and we are all aware of how that stress can block you, inhibit you, mess with your head and generally prevent you from performing to your full potential.

So, it is important to find ways to reduce this stress and generally make sure you are in the best mental shape possible to do everything to the best of your abilities.

The good news is that there are various effective strategies that you can help you to keep your body and mind in good condition, and by extension this can improve your ability to learn and speak English.

*

There are 9 things in my list here, but don't feel you have to do them all.

Even doing just a few of these things will help you.

Also, this isn't rocket science.

Much of it is just common sense really, but it is still worth actually doing these things, particularly when you consider the importance of forming good daily habits for long term progress.

If you find any of my points particularly useful or interesting - let us know in the comment section.

Science

There is science involved in this too. Each of my 9 points is backed up by scientific research, so there is genuine substance to this. I'll be giving details of that scientific research throughout the episode.

AI helped me put this episode together, a bit

Full disclosure, I did use AI to help me prepare some of this. I used a combination of ChatGPT and Google Gemini to search for different scientific findings about our habits and behaviour, and how they relate to learning English.

I have double-checked each of the scientific studies in this episode one by one to make sure the scientific research in each case is real (and not hallucinated by AI), and I have added a lot of my own comments and thoughts, plus some hilarious moments of classic random humour just to add in that trademark fun that you know and love from episodes of Luke's English Podcast.

Let's start then, finally, with point 1, which is about the very first thing you do every day, when you get up in the morning.

Clue: it does not involve staring at your phone and flooding your brain with cheap dopamine, which then causes your energy levels to crash at a few hours later. What is it then?



1. Start Your Day With Water (Not Coffee)

This might seem like stating the obvious, but it is a simple thing which can help you put your best foot forward at the beginning of the day.

The problem

When you wake up in the morning, you are dehydrated. After 7–8 hours of sleep, your brain lacks water, and this reduces alertness, slows memory, and increases fatigue.

Science says

Mild dehydration (just 1–2%) can impair cognitive performance, attention, and memory.

Vocabulary: *Cognitive*

By the way, the word “cognitive” relates to *brain processes*. So when we say “cognitive” we mean - *how the brain does things*. Cognitive performance = how your brain does things well or not.

Mild dehydration (just 1–2%) can impair cognitive performance, attention, and memory.

This is based on a study by Matthew S. Ganio *et al.* (2011). More about the science in a moment.

Often our first thought when we get up is to drink coffee (or a cup of gin in my case, no I’m kidding, I mean laudanum, haha, no - I mean a good strong cup of builder’s tea, also full of caffeine, or indeed a nice big cup of coffee) but this can actually be a challenge for our bodies in this dehydrated state.

When you wake up, your body is crying out for water, and so this is probably what you should give it, rather than coffee.

You might think - coffee wakes me up really well and I can’t function without it. Well, that is because you are addicted to it. You’re a coffee junkie, who can’t operate without their fix. Me too! I need that cup of strong tea to start the day, but have some water first.

Dehydration increases the rush you get from caffeine - so you might get a quick kick from it, but this also results in a crash later in the morning, which can last for hours.

In a dehydrated state, the body can’t deal with caffeine very well. It increases the initial rush that you get from it, but exacerbates the crash that naturally comes later.

For me, too much coffee (or to a lesser extent, tea) can end up making me feel anxious, jittery or irritable, and often those negative effects come hours after the coffee I drank - long enough for me to not associate those bad feelings with that innocent cup of coffee I had at the beginning of the morning.

I find that if I wait a little bit, drink water first, let myself rehydrate and wake up naturally, before I introduce caffeine into the system - I generally have a better morning and a better day, and as a result I am more productive, more able to focus and generally more positive, and I find that I spend less time swearing under my breath, when, for example, I can't find my keys or I can't find the solution to some kind of podcast-related problem when I am doing my work.

The life hack

Simply drink a large glass of water within 10 minutes of waking up. Do this before you have any coffee. It's very simple but vital, and can help you remember things, make good decisions, and do all the things you need to do to be a top-class learner and user of English.

Why drinking a hefty glass of water helps

- Rehydrates your brain and body
- Boosts mental clarity and mood
- Reduces reliance on caffeine for energy, helping you avoid the crash you get from the caffeine comedown (and topping up with more coffee during the day just compounds the problem)

- Helps you focus more easily on tasks like listening, speaking, reading, recalling vocabulary or grammatical structures and performing social tasks involving pronunciation.

This is common sense, but it is also backed up by scientific research, but I know for a fact that a lot of you will completely disagree with this, and that's fine. You do you! But this research doesn't tell us to stop coffee, but just rehydrate and then have coffee.

Here is some more about the science behind this

A study by **Matthew S. Ganio *et al.* (2011)**, which is one of the most cited works on the effects of **mild dehydration** on **cognitive performance and mood**, provides valuable insight into how even slight water loss can affect the brain - something highly relevant for language learners.

Study Summary

Title: *Mild dehydration impairs cognitive performance and mood of men*

(yes, apparently this study was done on men in their 20s. Does that make it applicable to everyone else? Who knows, maybe middle aged women react entirely differently to caffeine but I doubt it)

Authors: Ganio, M. S., Armstrong, L. E., Casa, D. J., McDermott, B. P., Lee, E. C., Yamamoto, L. M., & Marzano, S.

Published in: *British Journal of Nutrition*, 2011

Key Findings

- **Just 1.5% loss in body water** (which is quite mild and easily reached after sleep or light activity without drinking)

significantly impacted brain performance.

- **Affected cognitive domains included:**
 - **Working memory (short term memory)**
 - **Attention**
 - **Processing speed**
 - **Executive function** (that thing which helps with your overall sense of planning, decision-making, and speech formulation - your ability to make good decisions even under small amounts of pressure, like for example when you need to speak English on the phone or in a conference call and everything just goes horribly wrong)
- Participants reported **negative changes in mood**, including feelings of frustration and irritation.
(For me this is one of the worst states of mind for speaking French)
- The study was based on young men in their twenties, so the results might not be transferable to women or older people - but speaking personally *I would not be surprised if the same was true for women or older people.*

Why this matters for language learners

Language use, especially speaking, relies heavily on working memory, attention, and quick processing, plus being positive and resilient. These are the exact functions that dehydration disrupts.

If you're even slightly dehydrated:

- You're more likely to forget words mid-sentence
- You'll struggle more to focus on listening or reading

- You may feel mentally sluggish or more easily frustrated

It might also just put you in a bad mood, making you feel irritable, which as we all know, is no good for making progress in English, because using English can be frustrating - and if you get frustrated while doing it, you are likely to just give up and do something else, like go on Tik-Tok or start smoking again or something.

In other words, dehydration creates a perfect storm for “language block.”

What to do

- It might seem obvious, but still - it is important to stay hydrated as we might not even realise the impact it has on us.
- Drink **250–500 ml of water** shortly after waking up (before coffee)
- Sip water regularly during study or speaking tasks. Keep a re-fillable container with you and keep using it.
- Avoid relying only on tea/coffee - they’re mild diuretics (drugs that cause you to urinate) and may not hydrate you efficiently. Of course you can have them, but don’t rely on them for rehydration.
- Recognise signs of dehydration: dry mouth, headache, irritability, low energy, poor focus.
- Treat your mind like a plant - water it and nourish it (but not too much)
- Even if you are not thirsty, you might still be dehydrated.

So, be like me and take regular water breaks. In fact, speaking of that - it’s a good time to have a drink right now!

💧 Water break 💧



2. Use the 1% Rule: Aim Small, Win Big

This is a great one for new year's resolutions.

The problem

We set unrealistic goals like “be fluent in six months”, “Master the English language” or “Learn all the words or grammar in this list”, and we feel like failures when we fall short of these massive goals.

The science

The "aggregation of marginal gains" (popularised by Olympic cycling coach Dave Brailsford) shows that small 1% improvements in many areas over time add up to significant results.

That's right - Olympic cycling coach Dave Brailsford.

Is that convincing? I know some of you might be thinking. “He’s an olympic cycling coach, but - cycling - how hard is that really? I mean, it’s way way simpler than learning English. Think about it. With cycling you just have to make the pedals go around and then don’t fall off the bike.

Just keep your knees going up and down, and don’t stop or crash into a wall, and that is literally it.

Learning English is much harder. Why should I listen to what Olympic cycling coach Dave Brailsford has about learning a language, for crying out loud?

And you may have a point, but anyway...

The hack

Just focus on improving *one small thing* each day. Don’t bite off more than you can chew.

That’s a food metaphor, to explain how being good at cycling can help you learn English more effectively. I hope my point is clear.

Every day

- Learn one new phrase
- Focus on practising one particular feature of pronunciation (just one sound that you find tricky)
- Speak for one minute aloud
- Read one paragraph in English

These things seem so small as to be insignificant, but don’t underestimate this. Every little helps.

It’s sustainable, and it does work.

This contradicts the common, typical approaches I have seen from a lot of learners over the years:

- All or nothing
- Perfect thing or nothing
- Become fluent in 6 months
- “Master” English
- Being perfect
- Never making a mistake
- Learning the entire language before actually using it
- Cramming all the rules of grammar
- “If I am not learning all the most important language points in this lesson, the lesson is worthless.”

The **aggregation of marginal gains** is a powerful concept, especially for language learners and educators, and it’s backed by behavioural science, sports psychology, and real-world results.

What Is the Aggregation of Marginal Gains?

As I have mentioned, the phrase was popularised by **Sir Dave Brailsford**, the former performance director of British Cycling. Here we go again. Let’s see what this genius at riding a bike has to say. His philosophy was simple:

“If you break down everything you could think of that goes into riding a bike, and improve it by 1%, you will get a significant increase when you put them all together.”

Now, on the face of it that might seem a bit, stupid. How many things are involved in riding a bike? Holding the handlebars - just get 1% better at holding the handlebars. Sitting on an

uncomfortable seat - just get 1% better at sitting on an uncomfortable seat. Wearing very uncool tight clothing. Just get 1% better at that. Already you're 3% better at riding a bike.

But let's try to take this seriously.

What this meant was, he looked for **tiny improvements** in dozens (even hundreds) of areas, from nutrition and training to sleep quality, hand-washing technique (yes, really), and the kind of pillows cyclists used.

The result?

British cyclists went from nearly zero Olympic medals to winning 8 golds in 2008 and 2012, plus multiple Tour de France victories.

I am not sure how hand washing and pillows had anything to do with that, and I notice there is no mention of performance enhancing drugs. But still...

The Scientific Basis

While “the aggregation of marginal gains” itself is a catchy slogan, the underlying idea draws on multiple well-established psychological and behavioural principles:

1. Compound Effect (Mathematics of Small Gains)

Improving something by **1% every day** means you're **37 times better after a year**.

This comes from the compound interest formula:

$1.01^{365} \approx 37.78$ (one to the power of 365, which means multiplying 1.01 by itself 365 times, this is equivalent to 37.78)

So you convert this small gain of 1 into a gain of nearly 40 by doing something small each day.

This is the compound effect of doing a little thing on a regular basis.

James Clear (in *Atomic Habits*) explains this as the **power of habit formation**:

“Habits are the compound interest of self-improvement.”

With learning English, rather than doing single huge steps, it's just about doing fairly small things every day, day in, day out, over a long period. This could just be listening to something in English for just 10 minutes every day, or various other things which might not seem obviously helpful on their own.

2. Kaizen – Continuous Improvement

The idea of marginal gains is closely related to **Kaizen**, a Japanese philosophy of continuous, small, incremental improvements - originally used in Toyota's manufacturing process.

So if you work on your English little by little, every day, you could end up with a brand new Toyota. Just imagine that.

Studies in **performance psychology** support this idea: small, manageable changes are more **likely to be sustained** than dramatic overhauls.

3. Behavioural Momentum (Neal et al., 2012)

Starting small builds *psychological momentum*. A small success makes future action easier.

Research by Neal, Wood, and Quinn (2012) shows that even **minimal behaviour changes**, when repeated in the same context, lead to habit formation.

So, listening to a podcast for 10 minutes every day is going to lead to habits that will help you to build other beneficial habits into your life.

This includes maybe doing a bit of self-speaking in response to what you listened to, or writing down one or two things that you noticed in the the podcast episode.

One small habit leads to the adoption of other little habits. You end up building a positive cycle into your life. There we're back to cycling again. Turning the wheels of the bike causes momentum.

4. The Zeigarnik Effect

Once you start a task - even a very small one - your brain wants to **finish it**.

This supports the 1% idea: just **starting** often leads to more action.

That's actually a really good point.

Of course it is, that's why I put it into this podcast episode.

But really - starting a task is often the hardest thing and if you do that, you are much more likely to finish it.

For example, starting to listen to a podcast is often the hardest part of the process, because you actually have to lift your finger and place it on the screen of your phone for a split second - tough work.

Seriously though, I think if you are not already a regular listener of this podcast or any other, it is quite a big step to get a podcast app on your phone, find a podcast that you like, subscribe to it and then make it a part of your routine and actually listen to it.

But if you manage to make that initial step you are likely to become a regular podcast listener, and the long-term impact of that is definitely very good for your English.

Why Doing Something Small Every Day in English is So Effective for Language Learning

Language learning can feel like a mountain - but **the 1% rule makes it manageable.**

Instead of “become fluent,” the goal becomes:

- Learn one phrase today
- Listen to one podcast episode (or part of one)
- Write one sentence in your journal
- Speak for 60 seconds out loud

Over weeks and months, these tiny gains:

- Build active vocabulary, fluency and other skills and systems
- Build confidence
- Reduce procrastination

- Compound into *real* progress
- Change the way you think about yourself (“I’m the kind of person who practises every day.”)
- Make you much much more appealing to the opposite sex, or the same sex - whatever floats your boat. But your rizz factor will skyrocket if you buy my premium subscription.

Real-World Applications and Commentary

James Clear – *Atomic Habits*

“You should be far more concerned with your current trajectory than with your current results.”

Especially if you are flying through the air. But seriously, this means - focus on the things you are doing now, rather than the results you are getting now.

Establish the right routines now and let the future take care of itself.

James Clear repeatedly credits Brailsford’s marginal gains as a cornerstone of his framework.

Dave Brailsford – TED Talk / Interviews

In multiple interviews, Brailsford stresses:

- The psychological impact of constant small wins
- The idea that “nothing is too small to optimise”
- How tiny changes (like washing hands properly or bringing your own pillow to accommodation) had unexpected effects

on race-day performance. Again, the hand-washing and pillow talk. I don't really understand that.

OK, I just googled it and this is what I found:

Regarding washing your hands, Brailsford's team:

Hired a surgeon to teach the riders the best way to wash their hands **to reduce the chances of getting ill or catching a cold.** This was a 1% improvement in hygiene to avoid infection. As a result, fewer riders had colds during races.

Regarding pillows, Brailsford's team:

Searched for and determined the ideal type of pillow and mattress for each rider to ensure the best possible night's sleep, often taking them along to hotels during races.

Better sleep was seen as a key factor in recovery and performance.

OK fair enough then. We've all had bad nights in hotel rooms because the pillows were too hard or soft.

In Summary

- The **aggregation of marginal gains** is about the **compounding power of tiny improvements.**
- It works because it builds **momentum, sustainability, and identity-based learning.**
- In language learning, it shifts the mindset from perfection to **progress** - and that's where the real results come from.

Things you can do

Listening (Comprehension & Input)

- Listen to part of a podcast episode - it doesn't even have to be the whole episode. Just one part one day, another part the next and so on.
- Re-listen to a single section of an episode that you have noted previously - until you understand 100% (repeated listens are surprisingly effective)
- Shadow one sentence (repeat what you hear, in real time)
- Notice and note down one new word or phrase from what you're listening to.
- Write down one paragraph in a diary, or record yourself speaking about something in your day, every day.
- Do one section from a premium PDF each day.

Reading (Vocabulary & Grammar)

- Read just one paragraph from a book (graded or not graded) or article
- Learn just one new word and put it in a sentence.
- Read and underline one idiom or phrasal verb.
- Skim one product review, comment thread, or tweet in English.

Basically - doing something is always better than nothing.

Writing (Production & Recall)

- Write one sentence using a new word or phrase
- Leave a comment in English on a video or forum

- Add one line to a journal entry (e.g. “Today I learned...”) You could keep a simple, short journal with just one or two sentences each day - even banal things like “I ate an ice-cream. It was delicious but I felt guilty.”

Speaking (Fluency & Pronunciation)

- Record a 30-second voice message about your day
- Say one sentence aloud with focus on pronunciation
- Imitate the rhythm or intonation of a native speaker
- Use a phrase from memory in a real conversation or app

Mindset & Strategy

- Reflect on one thing you did well yesterday
- Note one mistake you made, and how to fix it
- Repeat a positive affirmation (e.g. “Mistakes help me grow”)
- Visualise yourself having a successful English conversation and even imagine it happening in your mind
- Spend that extra money on a really good pillow and practise washing your hands until you get really good at it.

That is the end of part 1.

Part 2 will be available next week!

Additional:

Spotify Wrapped 2025 - A New Champion

Hi Luke,

Each year LEP turns out to be (unsurprisingly) my favorite podcast. I try to give it every free conscious moment of my time (and a lot of unconscious because I sleep to some episodes too, but only those which I previously listened to with proper attention at least a few times, promise!).

My Spotify wrapped for this year revealed that I listened to LEP for about 23 601 minutes and I bet there is at least one person who can easily beat that. And that would be fair because unfortunately I didn't even manage to beat my own record from 2023 **when I spent 41,821 hours listening to your fantastic podcast.**

I won't give up though! I will do everything to gain first place next year because being mentioned on the podcast and getting a mouthmade drumroll is priceless! I listen to the podcast just for that reason.

No, not really :) The truth is, I listen to it because I always find it interesting and/or entertaining, regardless of the topic, whether there are guests or not, and whether it lasts an hour or three. I'm just open and grateful for each episode as it is. This is the type of content I would listen to even if I was a native English speaker and didn't have to do anything to improve my English. What this podcast gives me extends far beyond just improving my English



skills. Maybe what I'm writing is too flattering, but I don't care. You deserve it. So thank you for every episode and for all your efforts. I wish you lots of ideas for future episodes.

All the best to you and your wonderful family!

A loyal and thankful listener from Poland

Anita

Honourable mention

Andrei Arlouski, from Gomel, Belarus - a LEPster and “invisible ninja” for 4 years. 11 days and 6 hours listening to LEP in 2025 on *Pocket Casts*. 210 episodes. That’s the equivalent of 16,200 minutes.



Also - hello to other listeners who sent me their listening data this year! Sorry if I didn't mention you during this episode too!

Luke's English Podcast - teacherluke

