

A Journey to Fluency - Starting Point Scripts



TRACK 1 - ONCE UPON A TIME...

Once upon a time you were a baby, and you spent most of this time listening to the voice of your parents. They were talking to each other and to you of course... Except that you couldn't reply as well as they spoke... Because you could not understand everything and didn't know how to pronounce the words correctly you simply spent the time absorbing all the words, and sounds, you heard. Those words and sounds were simply stored in your brain in that special place where, unconsciously, you can have access to, as and when you need them. During all those years of somewhat 'passive' listening, you inevitably developed a pretty good sense of hearing!

When you learn a foreign language the principle remains the same! And it is more true for the English language as it is primarily an oral language. Which brings me to the pronunciation aspect. Listening to authentic language will help you get an impression of the pronunciation and consequently help you learn speak more naturally.

So let's make good use of this sense of hearing... simply listen, and listen and listen! There are more audio material on this website waiting for your ears to embrace the sound of English! Why not listen to the next track? Enjoy!

TRACK 2 - IMMERSION

The action of becoming completely involved in something usually helps achieve rapid results. This is why, for a beginner or even a more advanced speaker, if you want to start learning, continue to improve or maintain your knowledge, simply immerse yourself. Listen to English and read in English as regularly as possible, even if you don't understand. This website and all the courses content are in English to help you just do that. So, just immerse yourself!

TRACK 3 - LET IT BE!

Let it be... Let it be... No no, don't worry I'm not going to sing! This song, however, and its title couldn't be more apt to introduce what I call «Passive Listening». The phrase «Let it be» literally means 'stop interfering with someone or something'.

So «**Passive Listening**» is simply the art of letting your ears absorb the English sounds around you. This is when you relax, you don't try to understand, you simply listen! All you actually need to do is to create an English environment in your everyday life: for example, find on internet an English radio or podcast, turn it on and let your ears do the work! As simple as that.

I recommend the radio, because it is less distracting than television. And the radio provides an ideal background sound. While it's on you can continue doing whatever you're doing. You can be at home cooking or doing something else. Or you can be at work. Or doing an outdoor activity (like jogging, walking, gardening, etc....). Some of my students actually listen to the radio in the car while driving to work, or back from work. One listens to audio books, also while driving to work. With today's technology, possibilities are numerous.

What's important, is to do it **regularly**, even if only for 5 minutes per day, if you are too busy! However, a minimum of 30 minutes per day would be ideal.

Come on, switch the radio on!

TRACK 4 - TAKE AN ACTIVE PART

Take an active part! «**Active Listening**» is when you take an active part in the listening process. This is when you listen with a purpose, when you decide you want to learn something from what you're listening.

This means that a certain amount of preparation is required before you actually do the listening. What you need to prepare will of course depend on your current language knowledge, the level of difficulty of the material and more importantly on what you want to achieve.

Basically 'active listening' requires some time and work from you. And doing it alone can take a little longer.

My role as a coach is to guide you. To help your listening become more effective, your listening skills develop more efficiently and consequently help you achieve fluency more rapidly.

Combining passive and active listening is of course essential and an integral part of the listening learning process. And, if you've been listening to all the tracks so far from this website, you're already improving. And so, I can only encourage you to continue!

TRACK 5 - HOW DO I SAY IT

«How do I say it?» you might ask yourself! As you learn to listen, you automatically learn to repeat what you hear... and suddenly you find yourself stuck with the English pronunciation. You need to learn to master this from the start, really, to communicate as effectively as possible.

And I mean pronunciation, not accent! Because a good and clear pronunciation will guarantee you're understood by many and your message is understood. As your confidence in speaking grows, your accent will develop naturally.

The problem with English is that there is often little logic between the spelling of a word and its sound... You know the words and their meanings, except that when you speak... people sometimes don't understand you! It's all a question of facial muscles. The workshop «Voice Coaching» on this website is designed to help you improve your pronunciation and give you the confidence to speak English in any situation.

TRACK 6 - IT DEPENDS ON THE CONTEXT!

Context! This is probably one of the most complex aspects of the English language for learners. The earlier you understand the notion of context, the easier and faster you will communicate. Indeed, depending on the context, the meaning of one word may change. Which is why it is important to understand this notion from the start.

In my career as a coach, I've met some students who possessed a large vocabulary, but didn't always use it appropriately. This caused confusion or misunderstanding in conversations. And that's probably because they didn't think of the context. Of course it's good to know and understand many words, it is however equally important to know **how** to use them.

The maxim «Less is More» works well in the English language. I'll talk more about this later. The best thing is to start with what you know and make sure you can use it in as many contexts as you can. And then, grow from there.

For example, learn words in association with others and not in isolation, learn them in the situations you will use them. This will help develop your conversation skills. You'll remember them more easily and faster and you will be better understood too.

The key to «learning» contexts, is simply to spend time listening to English. So, switch on the radio to continue and absorb more English sounds.

TRACK 7 - LESS IS MORE

Less is more

Using **less** words can have **more** impact on your audience. True! it's not easy to do. A quote by Blaise Pascal, a French mathematician, could help illustrate it. Quote: *«I'm sorry I wrote you such a long letter, I didn't have time to write a shorter one.»* Unquote. The right words for the right situation is all you need... I know it sounds too simple!

In the «Writing effectively» workshop you learn how to use and build your vocabulary knowledge so as to use it effectively.

Also, curiously, the **less** effort you put into language learning, the **more** you improve your ability to retain new vocabulary, and the more relaxed you are. As you know, overdoing something can be a barrier to communicating effectively.

So, let it be, continue to listen, relax and learn, and your speech will sound more confident and natural!

TRACK 8 - SIMPLE

Last, and definitely not least... an expression much loved by most of my students... I still don't quite know why, only that I had to put it in in their honour. Let's face it, most of the content and workshops on this website have been, directly or indirectly, inspired by them... and I thank them.

And my last word is the word **SIMPLE**. Keep things simple. The simplest sentences will often open most doors throughout your international journey.

Have fun, learning...

