



All Ears English Episode 158:

How to Use Facebook Groups to Find English-speaking Friends

Gabby: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 158: “How to Use Facebook Groups to Find English-speaking Friends.”

[Instrumental]

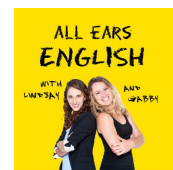
Gabby: Welcome to the All Ears English Podcast, where you’ll finally get real, native English conversation with your hosts, Lindsay McMahon, the ‘English Adventurer’ and Gabby Wallace, the ‘Language Angel’, from Boston, USA.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: So, Gabby, a lot of our listeners are asking me where they can see and get the transcript from this podcast.

Gabby: Right, because reading while you listen to the episodes will help you improve your listening skills even faster. And we do have text transcripts at every single episode. So if you haven’t seen those yet, don’t miss out. You can find them at AllEarsEnglish.com/conversations. That’s c-o-n-v-e-r-s-a-t-i-o-n-s.

[Instrumental]



Gabby: Do you wanna (want to) have genuine conversations with Native English-speaking friends? In today's episode, you'll find three ways to do that.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Hey, Lindsay. How are you doing?

Lindsay: Hey, Gabby. Doing great today and you?

Gabby: Oh, I'm fantastic. (You know), we have a great guest today, Kevin. Hey, Kevin, how are you?

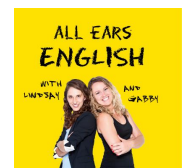
Kevin: Hello!

Gabby: Great.

Kevin: How you doing?

Gabby: Kevin is from *Ingles Ninja*. He's the creator of this site, (uh), which helps Portuguese speakers to learn English online. It's a great resource, which he'll talk a little bit more about later. But, but Kevin's here to share some really great advice from his experience learning language and also as an English teacher, (um), about how to find people to connect with. So let's talk a little bit about that, Kevin, about how you came to, to want to share this advice, and, and maybe three of your top, (uh), points of advice.

Kevin: Sure, (um), so, in, in, in this, the, this comes from a few, several years of teaching and also my own experience with learning languages and what I've realized is, (uh), especially these days, people have to learn English. It's, it's a necessity. We're not talking about language experts or polyglots, we're talking about people that, that need to learn out of necessity. And so they're given this task and a lot of times it's – they, th-they don't really, really even know what it's for. And it's just kind of a topic that they have to learn. (Um), so what I've realized with that, with – if you don't have genuine conversation with people, if you don't actually use the language to connect with people in a real way, (uh), it's very hard to stay motivated, it's very hard to progress and it, and it, and it just doesn't make a lot of sense. (Um), two, two ways I came through this is from my, from my own



experience. Since a young age, I, I learned Spanish in school and (um), I, I don't really know why, I think it was just I always wanted to, to, to learn Spanish, however I was usually one of the worst students in class.

Both: Oh.

Kevin: (Um), yeah, I, I, I kept going with it and I look back now and say, "Oh, that's crazy I stuck with it."

Gabby: Yeah.

Kevin: I, I just didn't put any effort. (Uh), I got nervous in class, I-I couldn't, I couldn't keep up.

Gabby: (Um).

Kevin: And, and, and, and I, and I think I just stayed with it 'cause (because) I was more interested in, in, in culture and, and just learning about culture and I think that's what kept me going.

Gabby: Yeah.

Kevin: So when I finally left the US, and I lived in Europe for a year, (um), I realized that me personally, when I was around foreign, (uh), speakers of other languages, I was actually someone who excelled at learning the language.

Lindsay: Ooh...

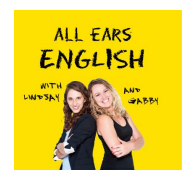
Both: Interesting.

Gabby: Yeah.

Kevin: Yeah, and compared to others who would do well in the class, I was actually somebody who could just go out there and start learning words and communicating with people.

Gabby: (Um).

Kevin: (Um)...



Gabby: So you...

Kevin: ...so it, and so it became, it, it became something that actually made sense to me. It's like, "Oh wow, well now I can actually talk to these people."

Gabby: So you're saying that real people are actually more motivating than your textbooks?

Lindsay: No.

Kevin: Yeah, yeah. Believe it or not. I, I'm more interested in, in people than, than shiny, new-smelling books.

Lindsay: Great.

Gabby: I think, I think most of our listeners would agree.

Lindsay: We're being a little sarcastic here.

Kevin: Absolutely. (Um). So, so yeah, that, that was very eye-opening to me and, and I said, "Well, I can actually learn a language another way." So when I started teaching privately, (um), here in Brazil, over time I realized this through many of my students too. (Uh), because of their need to speak English, a lot of them just – they really, they, they, they were stressed about it. They didn't know how to do it. They tried schools, they'd studied grammar, and just nothing really clicked.

Gabby: Right.

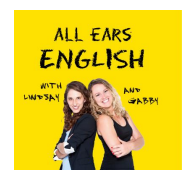
Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Kevin: But if you (cre-) – once I created a (rela-), (uh), (uh), (uh), the actual relationship and friendship with these students...

Gabby: (Uh-huh).

Kevin: ...and gave them the comfortable environment to start communicating with me...

Gabby: (Uh-huh).



Kevin: ...(um), you can actually see not only they, they started getting interested, but then they start progressing and they, and they stick with it. So through these relationships and through creating meaningful, (uh), communication, it, it just changed the whole, the whole learning process.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: It just goes to a deeper level...

Lindsay: Exactly.

GL ...of, (uh)...

Kevin: Sure.

Gabby: ...of thinking, of, of feeling...

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: ...of, (uh), just connecting with each other as humans.

Lindsay: Absolutely. I think that's so valuable.

Kevin: Sure, (I mean), and that's what language is for basically, right. We, we, we, we, when we connect with people.

Gabby: Right.

Kevin: When we, when we close it, put it in a box, throw it in a book, it just becomes a, some other school, school subject.

Gabby: Exactly.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Well, I know in Brazil, (uh), sometimes to enter a university or even to apply for (uh) a government job, you have to take a test that might test your English skills and that's a lot of pressure, I think. (Um), I don't know if...



Kevin: Sure.

Gabby: ...there's, there's similar situations in other countries. I think there are, (um), placement tests, entrance exams, that are really high stakes and so that puts so much stress on the students and they, they wanna (want to) just study for this important exam. But what you're saying is actually by connecting with people, you'll be more motivated and it might actually help you even, (you know), not only for improving your conversation, but it might actually help you become more motivated to study for other things, right.

Kevin: (Uh), yeah, th-that's, that's true. (Uh), and it, and it, and it could, it could help you just – it, it could give you another reason to, to get into certain, certain topics and certain subjects because it's not just some, something you do for yourself, but it's something to expand your world and to connect you with, with, with others...

Gabby: Yeah.

Kevin: ...as well.

Lindsay: Okay, so...

Gabby: Oh, go ahead.

Lindsay: So it should all start with a connection, and go out from there, right? It shouldn't start with a test, or start with a book.

Kevin: Sure.

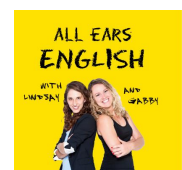
Lindsay: Yeah.

Kevin: An-an-and of course this (kind of) depends on the, on the, on the student. Some, some...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: (Mm).

Kevin: ...people love studying the dynamics of a language.



Gabby: Right.

Kevin: The majority of these, from my experience, are the other, the other way. They, they want to connect with somebody and they want to, to use the language to just, to just, to just, (you know), to, to become, to, to be important for somebody, with somebody else.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Sure.

Gabby: And if you're, for our listeners, if you're studying English and you've (kind of) hit a wall, maybe you feel a little bored with your current, (uh), studies, I think this is a good way to become motivated again, is to connect with people, connect with the culture and, and that connection will motivate you again to, to (kind of), (you know), go back and, and learn more, right. Cool.

Kevin: Sure and it will either show you or, or it will, (uh), show you again of actually why language is, is important.

Gabby: Great. Well, I think it's obvious how important it is to connect with people and have genuine conversation, but now the question is, where do we find people who actually want to have genuine conversations? (I mean), your students are lucky because they have you, but, (I mean), how about our listeners, (you know), (uh), how can they find someone to have a genuine conversation with.

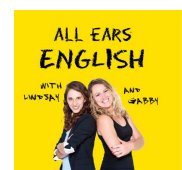
Kevin: Sure, and I, and I have a few ideas.

Gabby: (Uh-hm).

Kevin: (Um), I'm, I'm a [inaudible 08:24] these days of online learning...

Gabby: Okay.

Kevin: ...even though I'm a, I'm a private teacher and a lot of my classes are face-to-face, I'm always suggesting students go online because the, their, their (op-), their options just expand immensely...



Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Kevin: ...once they get to, get to the internet. (Um), one of, one of the ways and I, and I, and I've learned this, I've seen, I've ob-observed this from students. A lot of what I've learned, I've learned from observing how my best students improved and progressed.

Gabby: (Uh-huh).

Kevin: And, and one interesting way that I've realized is using Facebook, which is, is, is, (uh) – everyone's on Facebook these days.

Gabby: Yeah.

Kevin: And what you can do is you, you look for groups, Facebook groups, you become a part of groups and you either become a part of groups that are based on your interests, your hobbies...

Gabby: Right.

Kevin: ...(uh), they, they don't have to be, (um), on, on English, but let's say you're into photography. So find Facebook groups on photography...

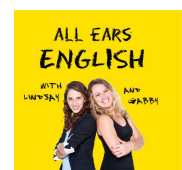
Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Kevin: ...and obviously, these will probably be (peo-), (uh), these are, these are either from English-speaking countries or groups that are international and you'll find English speakers and it's here you will find people that are interested in the same topic as you and it'll give you an opportunity to connect with them on Facebook...

Gabby: Right.

Kevin: ...(um) with English.

Gabby: Oh, interesting.



Kevin: And, (um), and wh-why this is cool is because you're, you have interests in common, but you're also – instead of just going out and trying to find somebody to listen to you or to, to have the patience for to, to help you with your English...

Gabby: (Uh-huh).

Kevin: ...you're, you're actually in an environment where you're giving back your knowledge about that topic and...

Lindsay: (Um). Ooh, I like that.

Kevin: ...there are people there interested in what you have to say and that – and from my experience, they, you, there's a lot of – most people have patience and time for, for people that don't speak English very well either. (Um), they're not going to kick you out of the group or, or, (you know), ignore you...

Gabby: Right.

Kevin: ...if your English isn't perfect. But they'll be receptive to you and (th-), and then you can get involved in these communities and meet people through these communities, (um), this way.

Gabby: That's great because English then becomes a tool to communicate about something else that's really interesting and motivating to you.

Kevin: Sure. (Uh-huh). And, and, and, and also, I think, especially for the beginning learners, chatting, (uh), typing and chatting, is, is, is, is a little easier and...

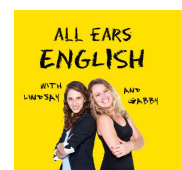
Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Kevin: ...less intimidating...

Gabby: Definitely.

Lindsay: (Um).

Kevin: ...and in, in, in even speaking.



Gabby: Definitely.

Kevin: And you, and you can even use online tools, Google, Google translators, stuff like that...

Gabby: Right.

Kevin: ...to, to, to (kind of), help, help your writing and just, and then just, and progress this way and get involved, (uh), in conversations. Another great (uh), area of Facebook groups to look for, each country usually has (uh) **Expat [11:08]** for foreigner groups...

Gabby: Oh.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh), (uh-huh).

Kevin: ...where people (con-), people connect, (uh), in that foreign country, (uh), b-because they're from around the world. And most of the times these people speak English.

Gabby: Right. And I...

Kevin: So you can – Go ahead.

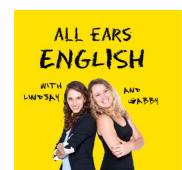
Gabby: No, I think those groups really appreciate having members who are locals of the country. (I mean)...

Kevin: Absolutely.

Gabby: ...you might, you might think, “Oh, I can’t join because I’m not an Exat, but actually we, (you know), speaking as an Expat, we really appreciate when locals join because we wanna (want to) know your opinions, your ideas, your experience, (you know), we want to ask you questions about the country where we’re living, (you know)...

Lindsay: Sure.

Gabby: ...we don’t know that much when we first move to a new country and we’d love...



Kevin: Sure.

Gabby: ...to meet you.

Lindsay: Yeah. I like this idea.

Kevin: Sure.

Lindsay: It sounds like we're taking the focus off of making mistakes and putting it back on to learning and contributing to a community.

Gabby: Yeah.

Kevin: It's our contribution, yeah, exactly. You're giving – you, you have something to give, so you're going to go into the group with knowledge and culture, and, and, and, and that makes it a lot more mutual, th-th-th-the (co-), th-th-the relationship is, is, is, is mutual, which I think is a, is a, is a much better place to start from.

Gabby: Yeah, I love that.

Lindsay: Yeah, I like that.

Kevin: Sure.

Gabby: Kind of shifting your thinking there. Are there other...?

Kevin: And, and, and last thing about that too is...

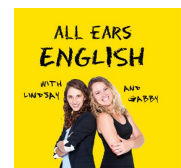
Gabby: Yeah.

Kevin: ...a lot of times people in these groups, they speak English and the language of, of where they are so...

Gabby: Oh.

Lindsay: (Um).

Kevin: ...(you know), people can feel more comfortable to, to, to (kind of) switch back and forth from languages and it, and it's not just a 100% English environment.



Lindsay: Okay.

Gabby: Yeah, that's great. Are there, are there other places online that you might suggest or other ways to find genuine conversation opportunities?

Kevin: Yeah, th-the other, the other one, (um), is online too. And it's, it's a pretty well-known site. It's called Italki.

Gabby: Okay.

Kevin: (Um), and I'm a big proponent of this. I'm not connected with this at all. I don't make any money from it, recommending it, but I just think it's such a valuable resource because there's (there are) so many people on there willing to, to, to, to share language either if, with an exchange, (um), (you know), just, just finding other people who are probably learning English like you. It's very hard as a, as an English learner to find a Native English speaker to just, (uh), exchange languages with because the whole world is learning English.

Gabby: Right.

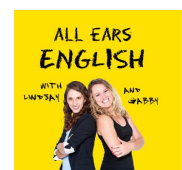
Kevin: So there's a, there's a lot more of, of, of, of people wanting to learn English, but if you're not closed to that idea, you can find plenty of people from all over the world from my experience. My students say there's (there are) a lot of people from China and Middle East...

Gabby: (Uh-huh).

Kevin: ...and these, these people are learning English, but it's very possible their English level is, is higher than yours...

Gabby: Right. (Uh-huh).

Kevin: ...(uh), and they will want to connect with you. They might be interested in the country that you're from or like I said, in general people, there's (there are) so many people online that spend their whole lives online so they have plenty of time to, to, to give back, (um), to you. And, and, and you can communicate this way. There's another, and also too, as far as finding



teachers, Italki has hundreds of teachers and I think it's really important to find a teacher that fits well with you and your style.

Gabby: Right.

Kevin: And if you (ju-), if you just stick to your city and you try to find face-to-face classes, your options are very limited.

Gabby: Right.

Kevin: But if you, if you go online, you can, you can search. If you go on Italki, you can search for the, the right teacher, which might be somebody who's young, somebody who's old, somebody's who serious, somebody who's informal. It could be a Native speaker of their language...

Gabby: Yep.

Kevin: ...it could be a Native speaker of, of your language. (Um), so you have such a selective – for example, in my case if I wanted to practice Spanish again, I would probably find somebody who speaks Spanish and Portuguese...

Gabby: (Um), yeah.

Kevin: ...because, because they could help me, (uh), not mix the two languages.

Gabby: Oh, yeah that's...

Lindsay: Yeah, yeah.

Gabby: ...a specific requirement...

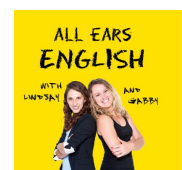
Lindsay: Great idea.

Gabby: Yeah. Great. So...

Kevin: Sure.

Gabby: Yeah, if you think about before you look for a teacher online or in person, think about the requirements that might be helpful to you.

Kevin: Sure.



Gabby: Right.

Kevin: Absolutely, yeah.

Gabby: There's (there are) a lot of different options. And I think it's just, it's gonna (going to) make things easier if you first think about your needs because otherwise it's a bit overwhelming...

Lindsay: Definitely.

Gabby: ...looking through all the online teachers out there. And I also think another interesting point you brought up is practicing English with other non-Native speakers, and we could do a whole 'nother (other) episode about that, (um)...

Kevin: Sure.

Gabby: ...but that, that is an interesting point. Just, (you know), maybe open up your conversation opportunities there. You'll have a lot more people who might be interested and available to speak English with you there.

Lindsay: (Um).

Kevin: Right.

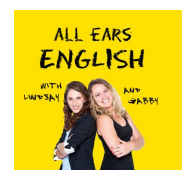
Gabby: Fantastic.

Kevin: Especially when you're, when you're in the earlier stages, (uh), it, it's fine and I think you can really learn from these people. And I'm really against any sort of closing your, your options when...

Gabby: Yeah.

Kevin: ...people say, "Don't do this," or "Don't do this," or "Don't do this." (Uh), (you know), you have to find, you have to make the language learning process very personal for you and what you enjoy and what you like and that's it.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).



Gabby: Great. Great. Were there any other ways that you wanted to share?

Kevin: Yeah, the last one is the, (uh), probably the easiest one. It's not online, it's not anywhere. This is, this conversation happens in your head.

Gabby: Ha, ha. That's great.

Kevin: ...with your, with yourself. And I think, (um), I did this a lot when I was learning Portuguese just (constant-), just starting a habit of constantly going through conversations, dialogues in your head. (Um), and, and obviously this is based on things that you listen to, that you watch, listening is obviously probably the most important thing, I think...

Gabby: Yeah.

Kevin: ...for language development. (Um), and, and you just use what you have, what you've, what you're learning and you speak to yourself. And you...

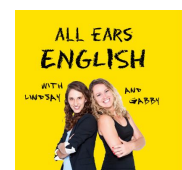
Gabby: That's great.

Kevin: ...you have a dialogue with yourself. You, you can have both sides of the conversations. So you're say you go to a restaurant, you're the customer and the waiter. (Um), you find out areas that you don't know about because if you're trying to have a conversation with yourself and you don't know what to say then you're like, "Oh." And later, (uh), get into this, this area a little bit more. And just, and just always pr-practicing and playing with the language with yourself.

Lindsay: Yeah, absolutely.

Kevin: (Uh), I've even had students go, go to the point of going and speaking in front of the mirror and, (um), talking to themselves, pretending their having a conversation and speaking out loud is very interesting. (Uh), another student of mine would take, would take her lessons from class and she would go home and she would pretend she was teaching, (uh), to her, to her fake students in her bedroom...

Gabby: Wow. That's great.



Kevin: ...pretending she was teaching the lessons. Very cool, (huh).

Lindsay: Wow!

Gabby: Yeah, I think that's fantastic. I don't think that's crazy at all because we need that kind of repetition and review and using the language, even if it's...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...with ourselves, that's how we internalize it.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: So it's not...

Kevin: Sure.

Gabby: ...crazy guys. [crosstalk] You should definitely talk to yourself. It's almost like when you're a little kid and you have an imaginary friend. (I mean), that's, that's how we practice language. So those are...

Kevin: Yeah, exactly.

Gabby: ...really great trips, (uh), tips, excuse me. (Um), Facebook...

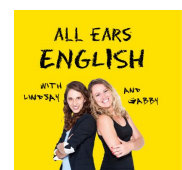
Kevin: [crosstalk] trips and tips, right.

Gabby: Yeah, exactly, trips and tips.

Kevin: Sure.

Gabby: Facebook groups, Italki, and then talking to yourself. So those are three great ideas for having genuine conversation opportunities. (Uh), Kevin will you tell our listeners where they can find you online?

Kevin: Yeah, sure. Absolutely. (Uh), my website is Ingles Ninja. (Um) and there you'll find little videos that I make on common mistakes and other blog posts, (um), also on YouTube Ingles Ninja, the channel and Facebook, unsurprisingly, Ingles Ninja.



Gabby: Thanks.

Lindsay: Okay.

Kevin: And Twitter as well, (um), growing, growing there. So just search Ingles Ninja and you should find me.

Gabby: Fantastic.

Lindsay: Great.

Gabby: Well, thanks so much for your advice today and it was a pleasure having you on the podcast.

Lindsay: Yeah, thanks for coming on.

Kevin: Oh, you and thank you guys. You guys are great. You guys are taking charge. I hope this, this goes on for a while because (uh), people, people sometimes do this for a while and then, and disappear. So, (uh) let's make this...

Gabby: Oh, we're in it to win it.

Lindsay: Yep, we're in it.

Kevin: Awesome.

Gabby: We're not going anywhere.

Kevin: Sure. Awesome.

Gabby: Thanks so much Kevin.

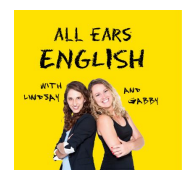
Lindsay: Thanks Kevin.

Kevin: Thanks guys.

Gabby: Bye.

Kevin: Bye-bye.

[Instrumental]



Lindsay: If you wanna (want to) put your ears into English more often, be sure to subscribe to our podcast in iTunes on your computer or on your smartphone. Thanks so much for listening and see you next time.

