



All Ears English Episode 184:

Stop Over Consuming and Start With an English Plan

Gabby: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 184: “Stop Over Consuming and Start With an English Plan.”

[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: In today’s episode, you’ll find out why it’s important to set a time-based specific deadline and why too many free English resources could be a distraction.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Gabby, can you believe that All Ears English has been around for a year?

Gabby: It has been almost a whole year. Oh my gosh! It’s amazing.

Lindsay: And it’s awesome. Our community is growing. We wanna (want to) thank you guys.



Gabby: Yeah, we love putting on the All Ears English show. But you know what, it's in danger.

Lindsay: Why?

Gabby: It's in danger because we need your help to keep going. We need your support. We've started a Kickstarter campaign that will help to fund the All Ears English podcast. All the episodes are going to continue to be free for you, but we need your help to fund our Kickstarter campaign to keep going. The deadline is October 1, 2014, and you can go find our campaign on our website, AllEarsEnglish.com/Kickstarter.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Hey, Lindsay.

Lindsay: Hey, Gabby.

Gabby: What's up?

Lindsay: Good. How's your coffee?

Gabby: Oh, it's good.

Lindsay: Great.

Gabby: I love a cup of coffee.

Lindsay: I know. I like dark, roast coffee.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Bold.

Gabby: Bold, dark, delicious.

Lindsay: Yeah, we like to live boldly.

Gabby: Ooh, I like that. Don't water down my coffee. Cool. Well, (you know), it's September 15th and in the US and many other countries, it's back to school time.



Lindsay: Back to school.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Get your notebooks. Get your pencils.

Gabby: Get your new jeans.

Lindsay: Your new shoes.

Gabby: Yeah.

(crosstalk)

Gabby: It's kinda (kind of) fun.

Both: Yeah.

Gabby: So, you may or may not be going back to school.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: You can tell us. We'd love to know. (Um), but we think that we're lifelong learners, (right). We're always working on learning goals and we're working on learning English, (um), our whole lives, (right). It's, it's – learning language and learning how to improve our lives is a lifelong task. But sometimes that's overwhelming, isn't it?

Lindsay: Yeah. Sometimes when you think about that journey being so long...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...it's really not, (you know), it's not motivating.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: It's daunting.

Gabby: I mean it is motivating, but it's like, "Oh my gosh where do I start?"

Lindsay: Right.



Gabby: So, I wanted to share a little bit about what I do to motivate and plan my improvements and Lindsay's gonna (going to)...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...share as well. But what I like to do is make a set amount of time...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...like ten weeks, twelve weeks...

Lindsay: [inaudible 03:08]

Gabby: ...meaning I have a deadline, right. I've realized recently how important deadlines are, even self-imposed deadlines meaning I make my deadlines. So if I start a plan of studies today. What is, (you know), ten or twelve weeks from today? Maybe November, December? It's actually perfect because that's about the same amount of time as a school semester.

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: And I think we're trained, (you know), if you've gone to school, if you've gone to university, especially for us teachers...

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: ...we're trained to live on a semester schedule, and I think we know that twelve weeks is a good amount of time.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: It's not too overwhelming.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: So...

Lindsay: Absolutely.

Gabby: ...yeah.



Lindsay: Yeah, I know. It's true, and I can tell a personal story. I recently decided to start working with a business coach for my other business.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: And I chose this coach because she offered a finite amount of time...

Gabby: (Um).

Lindsay: ...to do the coaching. It's a three month coaching program.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: So that means I start September 3rd and as of January 3rd we'll be done.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: And the good thing about this, guys, is that when that deadline approaches, you have the opportunity to reevaluate whether or not this is working. So, it's very easy to get caught in years and years and years of using...

Gabby: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: ...the same method and doing the same thing. Just kind of, (you know), going along...

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: ...in a state of (like) just being okay.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: But not great.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: And we want to live remarkable lives.

Gabby: Exactly. And having a deadline gives you a sense of urgency.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).



Gabby: And here at All Ears English, we make these episodes for you guys four times a week and we've never decided on a deadline or a day...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...that we might stop. But honestly we don't know how long we'll be able to continue and that means, (you know), we want you to know that, that we may not be able to do this forever. We want to.

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: (Um), but...

Lindsay: And we have – actually we have a kickstarter campaign going...

Gabby: Yeah...

Lindsay: ...which could really help us to keep going.

Gabby: To keep going, right. AllEarsEnglish.com/kickstarter. But I wanted to say is, (you know), please appreciate the time that you have, and please appreciate the episodes that we are making and...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...and there, there may not be a stated deadline, but there is always...

Lindsay: Right. (I mean)...

Gabby: ...a deadline, right.

Lindsay: ...in a, in a recent episode we talked about how there are only 28,000 days in your life...

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: ...and even that is a short amount of time. But...

Gabby: Exactly.

Lindsay: So, the point is you wanna (want to) infuse a sense of urgency into your life.



Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: ...into every aspect of your life, but (you know), this fall just choose one or two aspects. Maybe it's learning English, maybe it's – I don't know – another part of life.

Gabby: Right. Well, what I do and I'm gonna (going to) share my teacher secret. This is how I learned how to prepare a study plan...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...for a learner or even for myself. Anyone who's learning, whether it's English, or another language, or another skill, what you wanna (want to) do is think about how much time you want to work with and I'd like to say that's twelve weeks, okay. (Uh), and then think about an appropriate goal that you could reach reasonably within twelve weeks. Maybe give yourself a little wiggle room because things come up and you never know, you get busy, but maybe something that you could achieve in between ten and twelve weeks, (right). So maybe for English that might be, (um), maybe improve your top five, (uh), challenging sounds that are difficult for you to pronounce.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: Like if I, if I'm learning English and my native language is, is something else, (you know), it might be the 'th-' sound.

Lindsay: Or the 'r' and...

Both: ...'er'...

Lindsay: ...'l', 'ul'...

Gabby: Or maybe, (um), when we have, (you know), letters together like 'str-' like str-stratosphere. (You know), that could be a difficult word.

Lindsay: Right.



Gabby: But I'm just giving examples. You have to find out first, (you know), maybe through your own reflection or by working with, (uh), a teacher or, or a native speaker, what are your top five challenges. And then over ten weeks, you say, "Okay, by the end of 10-12 weeks, I'm going to be able to say these sounds."

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: And you might think, "Oh, it's only five sounds, 12 weeks that's a long time." But that time is gonna (going to) pass anyway and at the end of the 12 weeks, you have a choice. Are you gonna be able to say those sounds or not.

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: So even a small improvement is an improvement. (Um), so what I would suggest then is to break down, let's say, those, (um), 12 weeks, you have five sounds you want to work on, work on each sound for two weeks.

Lindsay: Yeah, perfect.

Gabby: That's ten weeks right there.

Lindsay: And maybe review, go back and...

Gabby: Exactly.

(crosstalk)

Gabby: Review for a couple of weeks. So my point is set your deadline, set a reasonable goal for that amount of time, break that goal down so you're not waiting until Week 11.5 to do everything, right. Make a schedule for yourself and get help if you need it.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Does that make sense?

Lindsay: Definitely.



Gabby: What do you think?

Lindsay: Don't procrastinate. Don't wait until last minute and you want to see the road map in front of you. And sometimes it means that you have to, (you know), write out your own road map and sometimes you can work with someone, right.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: But you want to have that road map set up (crosstalk).

Gabby: Well, Lindsay you were talking about focusing on one method or one skill to improve – don't be so scattered.

Lindsay: Yeah. Well, I...

Gabby: Tell us a little bit more about that.

Lindsay: Yeah, we talked about this when we talked about fear of success didn't we?

Gabby: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: We said one, (uh), symptom of the fear of success is bouncing around...

Gabby: That's right.

Lindsay: ...from different, between courses. So one thing that I'm doing with my coaching this semester...

Gabby: (Uh-hm).

Lindsay: ...is I'm actually gonna (going to) try to stop listening to all these other podcasts.

Gabby: Ooh.

Lindsay: Yeah. I'm gonna (going to) try to only listen to my coach...

Gabby: Wow.



Lindsay: ...which sounds a little bit – I don't know, maybe a little bit fanatic, like a bit of a fanatic, but...

Gabby: But it's for a set amount of time.

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: It's not forever.

Lindsay: And it's not that I'm not gonna (going to) question my coach, I'm gonna (going to) question her 'cause (because) I know a little bit about business too.

Gabby: You do.

Lindsay: I'm gonna (going to) weigh what she tells me to do...

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: ...but I need to believe that she has something that I don't have...

Gabby: (Um).

Lindsay: ...that she can help me move beyond where I am...

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: ...the plateau that I'm on. And in order to do that, I need to actually disregard what other people are saying...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...other tactics that I'm hearing every day.

Gabby: I know.

Lindsay: (crosstalk), "Ooh, I should try this tactic and that tactic and that guy said this and do this," but no, because then I end up listening to them and not...

Gabby: You don't give each method the time it deserves.

Lindsay: Exactly. And...



Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...what happens, you end up just giving up. So, (um), that's what I'm gonna (going to) do, tha-, (you know). Maybe we can suggest that for you guys, (you know), maybe just listen to All Ears English.

Gabby: I think you have to decide what works for you and if you feel comfortable, if you feel inspired, if you feel that you're gaining and benefiting from, (uh), All Ears English, then please, please consider that.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: (You know), but maybe there's a nother podcast that's better for you and that's fine.

Lindsay: Right. Think about, but think about what you can eliminate.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: 'Cause (because) I do think that a lot of resources are available online now and it creates a lot of mental clutter.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: ...which can create stress.

Gabby: What it all goes back to – for me, it all goes back to the one goal that you want to achieve in this 12-week period.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm), (uh-hm). Right. Exactly. So maybe you want to improve your listening skills, then All Ears English would be great.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Or to start to understand native, natural conversation. But maybe...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...if you're interested in getting a better TOEFL score, we're not the place for you.



Gabby: Yeah, yeah.

Lindsay: We don't teach TOEFL do we?

Gabby: Well, we don't directly teach TOEFL, but, honestly, listening to unscripted Native conversation...

Lindsay: (Um), could be...

Gabby: ...would be helpful.

Lindsay: Okay.

Gabby: (Um), but I think – yeah, you wanna (want to) really focus on one specific goal at a time and depending on how specific it is, you might need more or less time.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: But you have to figure that out. You have to think about your goals, think about the time you have and try to make a plan where you can focus on one thing at a time. And if this is kind of overwhelming, if this idea, (uh), just feels like kind of tough, get help. (You know), get, get help from someone who is good at making a study plan, or who can talk to you about what your goals are, maybe a coach, maybe a tutor, maybe...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...a, a teacher. (Um), yeah...

Lindsay: And before – yeah, so choose one method and go deep.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Don't choose ten methods and go to a superficial level...

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: ...with all of them.

Gabby: Right.



Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: Yeah, and use this fall as an inspirational time, a springboard to make that plan...

Lindsay: Ooh.

Gabby: ...so that by December, (you know), which may be a, a vacation to me for you in your country, may be the holidays. By that time you've achieved something.

Lindsay: (Mm), I like it. I like it.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Yeah, so then you can celebrate, "Whoo-hoo!"

Gabby: And we'd love to know what you want to achieve, what is your goal, what's your plan, what will you achieve?

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: What have you achieved? Share with us.

Lindsay: So why don't you come over to AllEarsEnglish.com/184 and let us know what that three month goal is for you.

Gabby: Yeah, that would be great. We hope to hear from you there.

[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.

