



All Ears English Episode 189: Your Last English Grammar Problem Solved

Lindsay: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 189: “Your Last English Grammar Problem Solved.”

[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 learn how to talk about your accomplishments and you’ll get rid of a serious grammar doubt that’s been driving you crazy.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Hey, guys. Remember your English is a Porsche and if you wanna (want to) keep tuning up your Porsche, if you wanna (want to) know all of the TOP 15 FIXES today, go straight to AllEarsEnglish.com/TOP15. And you can get that in a free e-book right away.

[Instrumental]



Lindsay: Hey, Gabby. How ya (you) doing today?

Gabby: Hey, Lindsay. I'm doing great. How are you?

Lindsay: Wonderful! I want to announce today one of our All Ears English Super Fans.

Gabby: Whoo!

Lindsay: Today's Super Fan is Sonia Petri. Sonia is awesome! She is so active on our blog, always leaving comments on our blog, letting us know how she's using All Ears English.

Gabby: I love to see her comments, so thank you Sonia.

Lindsay: Absolutely. So, what is she actually doing to use the All Ears English Podcast? Well, she likes to pay attention to the phrasal verbs that are new for her, so that she can then start using them in her life. She also listens to our rhythm, our intonation, and the way we speak, and she tries to mirror that when she goes out into the world.

Gabby: Yeah. That's great that she's using the English and (kind of) the strategies for connecting with people that we talk about.

Lindsay: She is like the model listener. A lot of people should listen just like Sonia does, and Sonia's advice to improve in English and in life – her tip is, "Never give up. Everyone has the ability to reach their goal, and it's all about hard work and dedication. If you just stay the course, stick to your paths, stick to your ideas of what you want to accomplish."

Gabby: Yeah. I love it. Everyone can achieve their goal. Lindsay, I wanna (want to) ask you about some things that you've achieved, actually, if that's okay.

Lindsay: That's okay. I'd be happy to talk about that.

Gabby: Awesome. Well, can you tell me – what do you think, (like), in the last few years, what have been, (like), your top three accomplishments? No pressure, but...



Lindsay: Yeah, no problem. Yeah, absolutely. So, what I've done in the last few years, I've hiked across Spain in the Camino de Santiago, which was fantastic, (right). I've climbed...

Gabby: Wow.

Lindsay: ...Mount Fuji.

Gabby: Oh, my goodness.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm). And let's see what else? Well, I've started All Ears English.

Gabby: Yes! Totally, we've started All Ears English.

Lindsay: Exactly.

Gabby: Well...

Lindsay: Those are my top accomplishments.

Gabby: ...yeah. No, that's awesome and I love that you're talking about business, but also personal accomplishments too. Tell me something. When did you hike in Spain?

Lindsay: Yeah. I hiked in Spain back in 2010.

Gabby: Okay. Now...

Lindsay: (crosstalk) summer.

Gabby: ...I've, I've never hiked in Spain, but that's something that I would...

Lindsay: Oh, you haven't?

Gabby: ...love to do.

Lindsay: Oh, you should do it, you should do it. It was an amazing opportunity.

Gabby: (Mm).

Lindsay: It was so cool. A really good chance to just walk and think and contemplate life. I was transitioning in my life from New York, living in



New York to living in Boston. I was – I needed time to (kind of) move my body and think, and it was just the coolest experience. I'm sure our listeners in Spain know about the Camino de Santiago...

Gabby: (Mm). Yes.

Lindsay: ...and I'm sure some of them have done it.

Gabby: Now is that something that you always wanted to do, or was kind of a spur of the moment, spontaneous decision?

Lindsay: Yeah, that was something that I had found out about through my friend Lena, who lives in Australia...

Gabby: (Mm).

Lindsay: ...a friend of mine that we worked together in Japan. She came to visit me in New York and she said, "I just had the super cool experience on the Camino de Santiago in Spain." So, I thought about it for a year and I said, "I want to do that when I have the opportunity."

Gabby: Nice.

Lindsay: So, no, I had just learned about it only a year before.

Gabby: Okay, and you have also hiked Mount Fuji. You've done a lot of hiking.

Lindsay: I have hiked Mount Fuji.

Gabby: That's awesome.

Lindsay: You know I think hiking really makes you feel great because you're out in nature, you're moving your body. Something about that combination is just amazing for me and my mind. So, I hiked...

Gabby: Totally.

Lindsay: Mount Fuji through the night. (Um)...

Gabby: Wow.



Lindsay: ...but my friend ended up getting altitude sickness.

Gabby: Oh my gosh.

Lindsay: But you know what? We got through it, we got to the top, and we got back down, and we have some awesome memories to go by.

Gabby: So, I've lived in Japan a couple of times. Now my third time, but I've never hiked Mount Fuji, and that's something I would like to do too.

Lindsay: Yeah. Well how 'bout (about) you Gabby? What are some of the things that you've done in the last couple of years, that you're proud of? What are your proudest accomplishments?

Gabby: Sure. Well, one of them, of course, like you said, is that I've helped to start All Ears English. I'm very proud of having done this together. As far as other accomplishments, I've finished a triathlon. So, I did last – no earlier this year. Wow, it seems like so long ago. I almost said last year, but this summer I finished a, a triathlon, the half-Ironman.

Lindsay: That was awesome. That was so inspiring for our community here.

Gabby: Thank you! Yeah. I know we go a lot of comments on that and I loved reading and responding to those comments. So, that was great. I really appreciated hearing from everyone. Besides that, another accomplishment, (you know), just off the top of my head, I have to say that getting my, (uh), degree, actually, my, my Masters in Education. (I mean), that was about five years ago, but it was a big accomplishment, and I just, I have to say, (you know), I really believe in education, and so for me getting my degree was a big deal.

Lindsay: Awesome. So Gabby, why did you decide to get your degree in TESOL?

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Why did you decide on that? Like, why didn't you study (geo-), geography, or geology, or...

Gabby: Ah, man.



Lindsay: ...geometry?

Gabby: Well, I love all of those subjects too. I love learning different topics, but, (you know), two reasons. I thought that taking Masters' level classes would make me a better teacher, and make me understand the English language, and how to teach it better, and it did. I believe it did. And also it's just important to have that credential. I think we all know that one reason why we go to a university is to get that degree. So, I'm, I'm happy that I did graduate, and I got my degree and so I have that credential.

Lindsay: And what about your Ironman experience?

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: (I mean), I love talking about this. (Like), what did you struggle with the most with the whole experience? (Like), what was the...

Gabby: (Mm).

Lindsay: ...hardest part of that entire event?

Gabby: Yeah, for me the hardest part was just not thinking about how long the whole triathlon is. Even though it's a half-triathlon, it's very long and there's (there are) points in the race when your body hurts. And so my body was hurting and I couldn't bear to think, "Oh my gosh, I have 20 miles to go. It's so far." I just had to think step-by-step. I had to think, "What else can I do besides take one more step?" So, I think...

Lindsay: (Um).

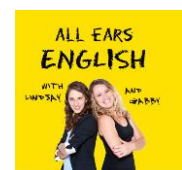
Gabby: ...the hardest part was just dealing with the distance and not thinking about it, (you know), not...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...concentrating...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...on the distance.



Lindsay: And did that mentality work? Did that work, when you changed your mentality, step-by-step...?

Gabby: It did.

Lindsay: ...put one foot in front of the other [crosstalk].

Gabby: It did. That was the key. That was totally the key to completing that race is just taking one step at a time. So...

Lindsay: I love it.

Gabby: I've learned a lot from that experience.

Lindsay: Awesome.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Brilliant. Yeah. Makes a lot of sense.

Gabby: So...

Lindsay: So, today we've talked a lot about our accomplishments...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...our experiences, right Gabby.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Today is one of our TOP 15 FIXES to tune up your Porsche.

Gabby: Yes, your English Porsche. We know that your English is pretty darn good, but what we've noticed is there's (there are) some errors, some mistakes, or some challenges that we still struggle with at the advanced level in English. And so what we're doing is helping you tune up your Porsche, as we say. (You know), your English is such a fine tool, and you've invested so much in learning so much, so far, in so much time, and we want your English to be really excellent, as beautiful and as, (uh), tuned-up as it can be. So, that's why we're doing this TOP 15 series for you and this, Number 9, (uh), the use of the 'present perfect' like "I have done something,"



versus the 'simple past' like "I did something," is a point that's a big challenge. And so we had this conversation about experiences because we commonly use, (uh), the 'present perfect', "I have done something," to talk about experiences, but you'll see throughout our conversation – you might wanna (want to) replay it – that we use 'simple past' as well. So, we jump back and forth between those two tenses to talk about the past, and I know Lindsay you had a good (kind of) general tip like how to figure out when do you use that 'present perfect' tense.

Lindsay: Yes. Absolutely. So, the key here guys is – what Gabby said is really true. Remember that it's, it's – we move back and forth very smoothly between the two.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: So, you wanna (want to) think about the context without both points, right?

Gabby: (Uh-hm).

Lindsay: 'Have done' and 'did'.

Gabby: (Uh-hm).

Lindsay: So, the way I like to talk to students about this is when we are using 'have done' we're zooming out, we're looking at that thing in the larger context, for example, "In your life," or "In the last five years, what have you done?"

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: We're zooming way out, and then when I asked Gabby, "Oh, what about the Ironman? How did you finish the Ironman?" Then we zoomed back in, right?

Gabby: Yeah. I like that.

Lindsay: "What did you do to keep going?" We go into the 'simple past', and then we zoom out again, "What else have you done in the past five years, Gabby?"



Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: So, we very smoothly move between the two by zooming in and zooming out.

Gabby: Yeah. I really love that advice. I think it makes it very clear when to use one of these tenses, or the other. I would add the 'simple past' is when you're talking about a specific time period, it's over. The 'present perfect', like, "I have done," could be more strongly related to something that's going on now, or something that you wanna (want to) to emphasize now, but definitely Lindsay's right. When you're talking about experiences, when you want to zoom out and talk about your life experiences, it's the big picture here. That's when you use the 'present perfect' like "I have done something."

Lindsay: Yeah. Absolutely. So, why don't you guys come back to our website...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...and tell us what you've done in the past few years, and what you did yesterday, for example. Come on back to AllEarsEnglish/188.

Gabby: Or AllEarsEnglish.com/189.

Lindsay: Right. Even better. [crosstalk]

Gabby: You can go to 188 too. That was a great interview we had yesterday with Mike Miller, but if you wanna (want to) comment on today's episode...

Lindsay: [inaudible 11:52]

Gabby: ...you can come to AllEarsEnglish.com/189.

Lindsay: We'll see you guys there. Thanks for listening today.

Gabby: Thanks guys.

[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.

