



All Ears English Episode 196:

How to Use Spreadsheets to Maximize Your English Learning

Gabby: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Number 196: “How to Use Spreadsheets to Maximize Your English Learning.”

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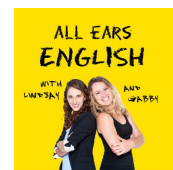
Gabby: Welcome to the All Ears English Podcast, where you’ll finally get real, native English conversation with your hosts, Lindsay McMahon, the ‘English Adventurer’ and Gabby Wallace, the ‘Language Angel,’ from Boston, USA.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: In today’s episode, we have Jane Lawson from DailyStep. Jane is going to share two awesome tips to maximize your English learning and one third tip to show you how to use spreadsheets to improve your English.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Hey guys, if you wanna (want to) get fluent in English, there’s (there are) two main steps. First, you have to listen to a lot of English. And you’re doing that by listening to the All Ears English Podcast. So congratulations, you’re halfway there. The second step, the most effective way to get fluent in English, is to speak English. You have to start practicing. And I



recommend that you find a native English speaker to practice with and to learn from. Now, I found a great website where you can do that. It's italki. And for a limited time only, if you come to AllEarsEnglish.com/italki, you can get ten US dollars to use on Italki services like English lessons from professional teachers. So check it out at AllEarsEnglish.com/Italki. That's i-t-a-l-k-i.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Hey, Lindsay, can you give me an update on that conversation service?

Lindsay: Sure, Gabby. So we actually have decided not to create the conversation service here at All Ears English. But you guys have continued to ask us where you can practice your conversation and we have some awesome ideas for you over on our resources page. Also, you guys have asked us where you can practice your vocabulary, get TOEFL help, IELTS help. Go over to AllEarsEnglish.com/resources and find all your answers there.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Hey, Lindsay.

Lindsay: Hey, Gabby. What's happenin' (happening) today?

Gabby: Oh, not much. How are you?

Lindsay: I'm feeling awesome because today we have a very special guest. We have English teacher Jane Lawson from DailyStep.com. Welcome, Jane.

Gabby: Hey, Jane.

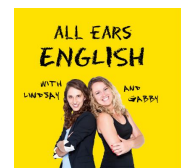
Jane: Hi Lindsay. Hi Gabby. Hi.

Lindsay: Hey.

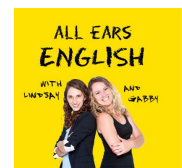
Gabby: Hi.

Lindsay: Thanks for joining us today. We really appreciate that.

Jane: My pleasure.



- Lindsay:** Yeah, we're so excited. So you have an awesome website over there at DailyStep.com teaching lots of students at all levels, I guess, as I understand. Is that right?
- Jane:** Yes, we teach all levels, (uh), beginning to advanced, and, (um), we keep a, we just give a short little lesson every day, a good, achievable amount that you can, you can really finish and feel that you've learned it properly That's all.
- Lindsay:** Very cool.
- Gabby:** That's great.
- Lindsay:** Very cool.
- Gabby:** Yeah.
- Lindsay:** So, I wanna (want to) know about your philosophy for language learning. (Like), (you know), you've built this great website, have lots of people that are learning over there, but what's the philosophy, what are the, what are the three key core tips that you could possibly offer our audience as ways to maximize their learning? Our learners are working hard and they wanna (want to) know some, some tips, some great ways to do it. Wha-wha-what do you think they can do Jane?
- Jane:** Okay, well, I would say (um), one of my top tips that I found very useful when learning language myself, learning language, (um), French or Spanish, and I found it really helps my students in English as well, is, (uh), learning to think in English. And that sounds, (uh), like a bit of a pie in the sky, like something that's very quite hard to do on a daily basis, but I think, (um), one way you can do this is by talking to yourself...
- Gabby:** Yeah.
- Jane:** ...aloud, or in your head as you're either walking around the house, or down the road, or looking at the television...
- Lindsay:** (Uh-huh).



Jane: ...or, (you know). Say for example, if I was (were) speaking to myself now, I would say, (um), 'I'm sitting here in front of my laptop speaking with the lovely Lindsay and Gabby from All Ears English Podcast. I've got a microphone in front of me, I'm wearing some headphones.' (You know), just very, very simple stuff. But you...

Gabby: That's great.

Jane: ...realize that, (um), you realize then that you're having to speak at the same speed that you're doing something or thinking something.

Lindsay: (Um).

Jane: And it really highlights gaps in your vocabulary as well.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: (Um).

Jane: Even very simple things like how, (you know), I'm just, (um), going into the kitchen to make a cup of tea. I'm pouring water from the (ca-), (you know), just...

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

Jane: ...simple stuff like that.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

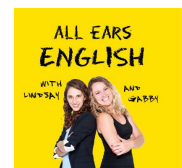
Jane: You suddenly think, 'Oh, what's the word, how, how would I say that?' (you know). (Uh)...

Lindsay: Oh, yeah.

Jane: A very simple thing, even at advanced level, I think that can be a helpful tip. And, (um), you could also do it while watching the TV, you can try and describe aloud what you, what you're seeing.

Lindsay: I love this.

Jane: (Uh)...



Gabby: Yeah.

Jane: Yeah.

Lindsay: I love this Jane. This is fantastic because this is totally free. It doesn't cost any money to think in English.

Jane: Exactly. It's totally free and you can play games with yourself as well. You can pretend you're a detective watching yourself or you can, (you know), all kinds of silly things you can do, but (um)...

Gabby: Yeah.

Jane: You, you gotta (got to) try not to (spi-), (I mean), some of my students who do this say, "Oh, I suddenly found myself speaking aloud on the train, (you know), under my breath," 'cause (because) they're trying to, (uh), (you know), describe people they can see...

Lindsay: (Um).

Jane: ...for example. So you gotta (got to) be careful that you don't look like the crazy person on the train.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Jane: But, (um), it does help. It does help.

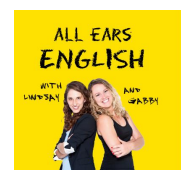
Gabby: Now, that's (won-), a wonderful way to make English part of your everyday life...

Jane: Yeah.

Gabby: ...just to bring it in to your everyday life, to your thoughts, just describing or even – I could imagine thinking about your plans, (you know), talking to yourself about...

Jane: Exactly. Yeah.

Gabby: ...what you're going to do.



Jane: Yeah, yeah. So like, also, 'What am I gonna (going to) do today? What am I...?'

Gabby: Yeah.

Jane: 'What did I do yesterday?'

Lindsay: Yeah.

Jane: Just – It's really important to keep speaking, to keep the words coming out of your mouth because I think one thing that (um) really is the difficult part about – even at advanced level if you say you're sitting with a group of native speakers and they're all chatting away fast and the conversation's jumping from place to place and then you want to chip in and say what you've got to say in the conversation, keeping your mind at the same speed as everything's happening in a foreign language is really, really difficult.

Lindsay: Oh, yeah.

Jane: (You know).

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Right.

Jane: Because you might think five minutes later, 'Oh, I should've said... Oh, oh, I wanted to say...' (you know). But then the conversations completely moved on, so it's too late.

Gabby: Yeah.

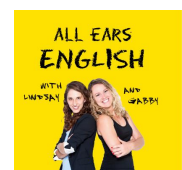
Lindsay: Oh, I think...

Jane: So...

Lindsay: ...we all know what that feels like don't we...

Gabby: Yeah.

Jane: Yeah.



Lindsay: ...when we're learning new languages. It's humiliating.

Jane: Yeah. Yeah. Even in English, it happens to me sometimes, but (um)...

Gabby: Oh, yeah.

Lindsay: Absolutely.

Gabby: It does. It happens to everyone.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Jane: Yeah.

Lindsay: I guess this is really just a habit isn't it? And, and we've talked about this before, it's like how do students develop that habit because it's the difference, it's just something you just tell yourself to do every day, but how do you get over that barrier to where it becomes a natural habit...

Jane: Well, I...

Lindsay: ...to think in English?

Gabby: (Um).

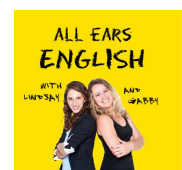
Jane: (Uh), (you know), I think this can help, help to make it a natural habit 'cause (because) it's very easy ...

Gabby: Yeah.

Jane: ...to do. As you say, it's free. You can do it when you're getting up in the morning and putting your clothes on or getting ready for work or whatever you're doing, (you know), it's a, it's an easy habit to make.

Gabby: It's, it's a choice though, isn't it? Because we naturally do this in our native language. So it's a choice to make that shift because at first, you're not going to be able to think in English or in another language as quickly...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).



Gabby: ...as you do in your native language. So it's going to be more difficult at first, but it will be a great choice.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Jane: Yeah.

Lindsay: I think it really is a choice, you're right.

Jane: (Huh), that's – yeah, it's...

Lindsay: Awesome. Sorry Jane. Go 'head (ahead).

Jane: No, I was gonna (going to) say, it does get easier, it does get easier, yeah.

Gabby: Yes.

Lindsay: Absolutely.

Gabby: And then you'll start to dream in English...

Lindsay: Ooh.

Gabby: ...or in your second language because those, those thoughts will become more and more natural and all of a sudden, you're going to be having, (uh), (you know), English – two-for-one, when you're awake and sleeping.

Jane: Yeah, yeah.

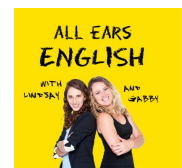
Lindsay: Yeah. So what's the second thing that students can do to maximize their learning. So far we have 'think in English,' and what would be the second thing?

Jane: (Um), well, the second thing, I think it's very important to get things with transcripts, where you have the audio and the transcript at the same time.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Jane: It could be, (um), an online audio lesson, it could be an audio book, or it could be, you can get movie scripts for your (fav-), favorite movies...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).



Jane: ...or TV programs. (Um), there are some good websites where you can download the scripts. And, (um), try and speak along with the scripts.

Gabby: Yeah.

Jane: So, this is to do with learning to speak at the same speed as the native speaking people do, whether, (you know), it, as the English-speaking people do. And this helps, (um), both speaking and listening because...

Gabby: Yes.

Jane: ...of course – if, if English isn't your first language, you always hope that everybody's going to speak clearly and slowly, and you're going to be able to hear

Gabby: Yeah, we know that's not true.

Jane: Yeah, exactly. So, (um), (you know), the words all run together, don't they? Sometimes...

Gabby: Yeah.

Jane: ...words are missed out.

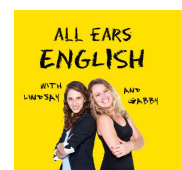
Lindsay: Yeah.

Jane: Sometimes, (um), people use the wrong grammar. (Someti-), (you know), there's (there are) all different kinds of ways, (uh), the English is difficult to understand. So I think if you can learn to try and speak along with a script...

Lindsay: (Mm-hm).

Jane: ...(um), then you're learning – once you can speak at the same speed or approximately the same speed as native speakers or at least try, so that you can see how the language fits together and which words you can't hear in that speech.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).



Jane: ...then all of a sudden it starts to fit together when you hear people speaking. It doesn't sound so fast anymore.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Jane: (Uh)...

Lindsay: So this is a way to connect the dots...

Gabby: Absolutely.

Lindsay: ...with what you hear to what is real in the language, what's really happening.

Jane: Yeah. So, so, (you know), as I said, if you have a favorite movie or a favorite book, you can buy audio books, you can also get online audio lessons. (You know), we provide them, other sites provide them, (tha-), those audio lessons with scripts, very important (uh)...

Lindsay: Yeah. Interesting.

Jane: ...ways to. And you can also get free stuff as well, (um), (you know), lots of, (uh), newspapers, for example, might have a, a podcast and script or something...

Gabby: That's right.

Jane: ...with it. So...

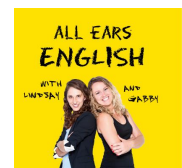
Lindsay: (Um).

Jane: ...yeah.

Lindsay: Very cool. And I just have to jump in here and let our listeners know, they know if they wanna (want to) a transcript for *this* episode, they can go to AllEarsEnglish.com/conversations just to jump that, add that in there. Very cool. Very cool.

Jane: Yeah. So that, so, so your listeners could try speaking along with us.

Lindsay: Yeah. Absolutely.



Gabby: That'd be wonderful.

Lindsay: I think we have a lot of listeners who try to do that. (You know), they really – they're creative in the way they use the transcripts and I notice that the best students definitely do that. They take the initiative and they sit down with the transcripts and the (sh-), the listening piece. Absolutely.

Gabby: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: I like it. I like it. So Jane, what's your third tip?

Jane: Well, I think my third tip is, (uh), very traditional, really, tip. It's – (uh), you do have to keep a record of the vocabulary and the phrases and the phrasal verbs and idioms that you learn that are new for you. I think it's a good idea to keep, (um), something like a spreadsheet, and (um), add, (you know), just copy/paste them into a, (uh), into a spreadsheet from – could be from the podcast vocabulary or it, or, or an audio lesson or something that you find and just paste, (you know), categorize them according to phrasal verb, or topic, or idiom or something. So if you put, if – rather than the traditional, (um), little vocabulary book that you write things down in...

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

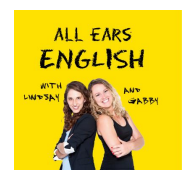
Jane: ...(um), if you keep them in a, in a spreadsheet, you, you can revisit them. (You know), it's quite difficult to keep all of this new vocabulary, phrases, idioms and phrasal verbs that come into your life from an (alt-), all kinds of different sources...

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Jane: ...to, to actually realize how much you know, what is your active vocabulary, and your passive vocabulary.

Lindsay: (Hm)?

Jane: (You know), your active vocabulary, obviously, is what you can say, what you can think of at the right time at the right place to say – your passive



vocabulary being what you understand, but you might not be confident enough or know it quite well enough to use. (Um), I think it's important to, to actually write it down, (you know), e-either in a book, or, or better, I think, in a spreadsheet because a spreadsheet is sortable, copi-able...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Jane: ...paste-past-able. (You know), you can put all the idioms together, you can put all the language to do with business together or you could put everything you learned in October together or you could, (you know)...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Jane: ...you could sort it in different ways. And, (um), because, (um), phrasal verbs and things are so similar, (you know), the, the particle might be in a different place and the meaning might change...

Lindsay: (Um).

Gabby: (Uh-huh).

Jane: ...it's quite important to (kind of) keep a track of what the grammar of these things actually is. I, I think grammar can be a bit of a – (som-), sometimes a bit of a dirty word.

Lindsay: It can be.

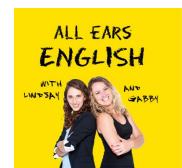
Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: It can be.

Jane: (You know), everyone says, "Oh, you don't need to worry about the grammar," but you do, really, but, (you know), not without getting too...

Lindsay: Paralyzed.

Jane: Yeah.



Gabby: Well, when it changed the meaning, when the meaning changes, then of course, you need to know that, right?

Jane: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, so, (um), obviously, (you know), English learning has moved on. We don't suggest sitting and pouring over grammar books anymore, but just keeping a track of the, the, (you know), the way that idioms and phrasal verbs and structures are put together, will just make (um), your English, well, it will, it'll make you understand more English and obviously be able to use it better 'cause (because) you can just read through your spreadsheet every now and then or print off a page of it, have a look through, 'Oh, yes, I remember that.'

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: That's great for review.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Really good for review.

Lindsay: Yeah. I like this Jane because it's methodical, right?

Jane: Yeah, yeah.

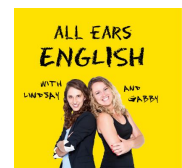
Lindsay: And also, it's a way to build momentum. I think momentum is huge. (You know), when I work on my business, I like to write out all the actions that I've completed in a big chart and then I can see a week later all the things that are done and that makes me feel super motivated. So I think this...

Jane: Yes.

Lindsay: ...could work for students too. They can go, "Oh, I know that, I know that, I know that."

[crosstalk]

Lindsay: It's a momentum builder. Absolutely.



Gabby: Yeah, it's a way to actually see your own progress over time. It's not taking a test, but it's deeper than that because you're seeing exactly how many words and phrases that you've learned since you started taking notes.

Lindsay: Exactly.

Jane: Yes, exactly. Yeah, yeah.

Lindsay: I love it. Wow. Very cool.

Gabby: Great.

Lindsay: So just to recap, I'm just gonna (going to) summarize what you've told us today. (Um), so your first tip is to think in English more often, right? So to...

Jane: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...thinking or describing objects around you, describing what you're doing, even dreaming in English if you can as we added on, right?

Jane: Yeah.

Gabby: Yeah.

Jane: (Uh), (uh), the way to do that is talking aloud as much as possible while you're thinking.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: Okay. Perfect. So that's an important part, (right), talking loud...

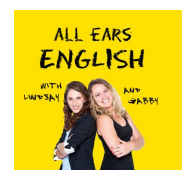
Jane: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...and also thinking. Perfect.

Jane: Yeah.

Lindsay: (Uh)...

Jane: Saying what you're thinking. Yeah.



Lindsay: Okay. Okay. Great. And then we also said it's important to use transcripts when you're listening, (um), to audio. So you wanna (want to) use that sometimes with movies, TV shows, or even, (uh), listening activities online that you're using to learn English.

Gabby: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: (Right), and then you mentioned that you should keep a record, keep a spreadsheet. This is a new approach that I haven't heard before, but I like it, I like how methodical it is – (um), of the words that you actually know and group them out according to phrasal verbs and different grammar terms and different types of vocabulary words. Is that right?

Jane: Yes, I think so. And then you can always highlight ones that you find it hard to remember, you might take off some that you think you know 100%, yeah. (Tha-), those are my top tips.

Lindsay: Love it. Love it. Thanks so much Jane for letting us know. Now, where can our listeners find you online if they wanna (want to) check out your work and see what you have to offer over there?

Jane: Well, (um) my website is DailyStep.com and (uh) we're based in London but we do lessons in British and American English. In fact, also the differences between the two, which is quite interesting.

Lindsay: That is interesting.

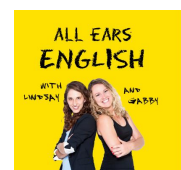
Jane: For all students.

Gabby: Yeah.

Jane: And, (um), yeah, so, so that's, we, we do regular blogs as well. (Um), one of our recent ones was actually how to think in English, so a little bit of help on there.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Jane: And, (um), yeah. We, we, we do, we do regular, daily audio lessons for people to speak along with. So...



Lindsay: Excellent.

Jane: ...I guess my tips that I've given you are also a part of the philosophy of my teaching that comes through on our website too.

Lindsay: Absolutely. Absolutely. This is fantastic. Thank you so much for coming by today and letting us know...

Jane: Oh, my pleasure.

Lindsay: ..how we can maximize our English learning. That's fantastic.

Gabby: Yeah. Great tips. Thank you Jane.

Lindsay: Thank you so much Jane. Have a great day.

Jane: You too. Thank you so much for inviting me.

Lindsay: Take care. Bye.

Jane: You too. Bye.

Gabby: 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.

