



ATT ENGLISH ACADEMY

THE HOW TO SERIES

Speak

English

Without

the

Anxiety

SHAUN SIMPSON

THE WORKSHEETS

THE WORKSHEETS

These are the **Try this** exercises from *Speak English Without the Anxiety*, laid out on A4 with more room to write. Each sheet names the chapter and point it comes from, so you can go back to the explanation and the research behind it.

You don't need to do them all. If time is short, do the ★ **Core activity** in each chapter: it's the one exercise that does most of the work. Print a sheet again whenever you want a fresh copy; many work best repeated over a few weeks.

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- Who comes to mind?
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- Say it plainly
- One person, one action

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

YOUR STARTING POINT

Take five minutes to answer these honestly, before you read Chapter 1. Rate each statement from 0 (never true) to 4 (almost always true). You'll repeat this check in Chapter 12, and the difference will be part of your evidence.

STATEMENT	TYPE	TODAY 0-4	CH 12 0-4
My mind goes blank when someone asks me a question in English.	C		
I avoid phone calls in English if I can.	C		
In conversations, I rehearse each sentence in my head before I say it.	C		
I worry that people are judging my accent or grammar.	J		
I stay quiet in meetings or groups, even when I have something to say.	J		
After speaking English, I replay my mistakes for hours.	J		
I apologise for my English before I've even started speaking.	J		
Interviews, presentations or tests in English make me panic.	T		
I spend far too long writing and rewriting simple emails.	T		
I feel that my English is much worse than it really is.	—		
Total (out of 40)			

Reading your answers. There's no pass mark: this is a starting point, not a diagnosis. Notice where your highest scores cluster. Mostly **C** statements suggest communication apprehension; mostly **J**, fear of being judged; mostly **T**, test anxiety. Chapter 1 explains all three.

YOUR 12-WEEK PROGRAMME

One lesson, one chapter and one real-world exercise a week. Tick each box as you go. Part Four chapters can be added as "bonus weeks" whenever you need them.

WEEK	CHAPTER	CORE ACTIVITY	LESSON	READ	DID IT
PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS					
1	Why English makes you anxious	Anxiety trigger map			
2	Rewriting your learning story	English learning timeline			
3	Mistakes are data	The error collection			
4	Your confidence plan	Practice inventory · four-week tracker			
Checkpoint: Do I understand my alarm? Do I have a plan I can actually keep?					
PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES					
5	Fellow learners	Find five practice partners			
6	Graduated exposure	Build your own ladder			
7	Native speakers: low stakes	Low-stakes inventory			
8	Native speakers: high stakes	High-stakes plan			
9	Written confidence	Writing audit · five-minute email			
Checkpoint: Have I climbed at least two rungs? What's easier than it was?					
PART THREE · LONG-TERM GROWTH					
10	When anxiety returns	Write your setback card			
11	Your learning ecosystem	Weekly English audit · three-month plan			
12	Celebrating your growth	Before-and-after inventory · starting-point check			
BONUS WEEKS · PART FOUR, IN ANY ORDER					
+	13 Accent and identity	The repeat log	—		
+	14 Phone and video calls	The call card	—		
+	15 Small talk and culture	Ping-pong practice · your decoder	—		
+	16 Listening	Your listening ladder	—		
+	17 Tests and interviews	The timed mock	—		
+	18 Helping someone else	Safer-meeting checklist	—		

CHAPTERS 1-4 · BEST READ IN ORDER

PART ONE

FOUNDATIONS

Understand what your anxiety is doing, rewrite the story you tell about your English, and build a plan that fits your life.

01	Why English makes you anxious	7 sheets
02	Rewriting your language learning story	6 sheets
03	Mistakes are data, not disasters	6 sheets
04	Your personalised confidence plan	5 sheets

1

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 1 WHY ENGLISH MAKES YOU ANXIOUS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 1 · AN ALARM THAT CAN'T TELL A MEETING FROM A TIGER

TRY THIS

This week · 2 minutes each time

CATCH YOUR ALARM EARLY

For your next three English conversations, notice which signal arrives first. Tick it straight afterwards, and circle the one that came first.

SIGNAL	CONVERSATION 1	CONVERSATION 2	CONVERSATION 3
Heart speeds up			
Breath shortens or stops			
Face or neck heats			
Shoulders or jaw tighten			
Stomach tightens			
Voice quietens or shakes			
Mind goes blank or races			

Observe it like a scientist, not a judge. You're not trying to change anything yet. You're learning what your alarm sounds like, so that the technique in Point 2 has something to respond to.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

1

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 1

WHY ENGLISH MAKES YOU ANXIOUS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 2 · YOUR WORDS HAVEN'T GONE. YOUR ATTENTION HAS.

TRY THIS

30 seconds · use any time

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL SIGH

- 1 Breathe in through your nose.** A full, comfortable breath, not a huge gulp.
- 2 Add a second, short sniff on top.** Two inhales, one breath.
- 3 Let it go slowly through your mouth.** Make the out-breath longer than the in-breath.
Repeat two or three times.

EMERGENCY VERSION

One sigh, mid-conversation, while you say "Let me think about that for a moment." Nobody will notice anything but a thoughtful pause.

COMMON MISTAKE

Only trying it in a crisis. Practise when you're calm, while the kettle boils, so your body already knows it when you need it.

Practice tracker: tick each day you do three sighs while calm.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

1

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 1

WHY ENGLISH MAKES YOU ANXIOUS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 3 · THE LOOP THAT FEEDS ITSELF

TRY THIS

Next 5 conversations

THE TWO-SECOND PAUSE

Choose two phrases from the list below and write them on a sticky note by your screen. In your next five English conversations, even easy ones, pause on purpose before at least one answer and use a phrase. Notice what happens. (Usually: nothing at all. The conversation simply carries on.)

TO BUY TIME	REGISTER
Let me think about that for a moment.	neutral
That's a good question. Give me a second.	neutral
Hmm, how should I put this...	neutral
Give me a sec, it's on the tip of my tongue.	informal
TO ASK FOR HELP	
Sorry, could you say that again?	neutral
Pardon? (US English: <i>Excuse me?</i>)	polite
Let me just check I've understood...	neutral
TO RECOVER	
Let me put that another way.	neutral
I'm a bit nervous, so bear with me.	neutral

A word on "sorry". One "sorry" before a question is very British and perfectly natural. Repeated apologies for your English ("sorry, my English is bad") make listeners focus on your English instead of your message. This week, swap one apology for "Let me put that another way."

My two phrases:

1

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 1

WHY ENGLISH MAKES YOU ANXIOUS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 4 · THREE KINDS OF NERVES, AND WHICH ARE YOURS

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

About 15 minutes

YOUR ANXIETY TRIGGER MAP

This is the most important exercise in the chapter. You'll come back to it in Chapters 6 and 12, so keep it somewhere safe.

- 1 List your English situations.** Every one you meet or avoid: meetings, phone calls, the café, emails to colleagues, small talk at the school gate.
- 2 Rate each one from 1 to 10.** 1 is calm; 10 means you avoid it completely.
- 3 Write what exactly worries you.** Not "I'm nervous", but the actual thought.
- 4 Name the circle.** C for communication, J for being judged, T for being tested.

SITUATION	1-10	WHAT EXACTLY WORRIES ME?	C / J / T
<i>Monday team call</i>	7	<i>I'll speak too slowly and waste everyone's time.</i>	J
<i>Phoning the GP surgery</i>	8	<i>I won't understand the receptionist.</i>	C

Look for the pattern. When Daniel finished his map, every situation he rated 7 or above had one thing in common: no chance to prepare. Every situation below 4 involved writing. That one pattern shaped his whole plan in Chapter 4. What's yours?

The pattern I notice:

1

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 1
WHY ENGLISH MAKES YOU ANXIOUS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 5 · YOUR ALARM IS A POOR FORTUNE-TELLER

TRY THIS

7 days · 2 minutes a day

THE PREDICTION LOG

Each day, pick one English situation from your trigger map. Before it, write what you predict. Afterwards, write what really happened: the facts, not your interpretation.

DAY	SITUATION	I PREDICT...	BELIEF %	WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

At the end of the week: how many came true in full?

If I could go back, what would I tell myself before the first one?

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 1

Name

Date _____

POINT 6 · CALM ENOUGH, NOT CALM

TRY THIS

1 minute · when you're above a 7

5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING

Name, silently or on paper:

5	things you can see	
4	things you can feel feet on the floor, the chair	
3	things you can hear	
2	things you can smell	
1	thing you can taste or a taste you like	

Practise it once now, while you're calm, so it's familiar. Then use it before a high-pressure call, or whenever you notice panic rising.

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 1

Name

Date

POINT 6 · CALM ENOUGH, NOT CALM

TRY THIS

2 minutes · once

YOUR DAY-ONE RECORDING

Record yourself, audio only, answering this question in English: *Describe a time you felt nervous about using English. What happened? How did you feel?* Speak for one to two minutes. No script. Don't stop for mistakes. Don't re-record. Then, and this matters, don't listen to it yet. Label it with today's date and put it away. In Chapter 12 you'll record another, and compare the two.

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

2

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 2

REWRITING YOUR LANGUAGE LEARNING STORY

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 1 · NOBODY IS BORN BELIEVING THEY'RE "BAD AT ENGLISH"

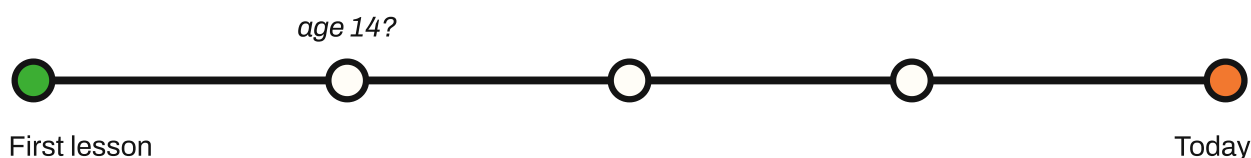
CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

About 20 minutes

YOUR ENGLISH LEARNING TIMELINE

Draw a line from your first English lesson to today. Mark eight to ten moments that mattered: good and bad teachers, exams, times you felt proud, times you felt embarrassed, moments you avoided English. For each one, write two things: what actually happened, and what you concluded from it.



WHEN	WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED (THE FACTS)	WHAT I CONCLUDED
Age 14	<i>I said "presen-tay-shun". Three students laughed. The teacher corrected me gently. I finished and got a B.</i>	<i>Everyone thought I was stupid. I can't speak English in front of people.</i>

Look back over it. Are your conclusions consistently harsher than the facts? Do you discount the good moments and remember the bad ones in detail? Most people's timelines show exactly that pattern.

2

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 2 · SAME EVENT, TWO VERY DIFFERENT STORIES

TRY THIS

5 minutes

FACT OR INTERPRETATION?

Tick the right column for each line. (Answers at the foot of the box.)

STATEMENT	FACT	INTERPRETATION
a. My manager asked me to repeat my point.		
b. My manager thinks my English isn't good enough.		
c. I paused for about five seconds before answering.		
d. Everyone noticed how nervous I was.		
e. I'm just not a languages person.		
f. I got 62% in my last English exam.		

Now take one moment from your timeline and rewrite your conclusion as Story B: accurate, and kind.

The fact:

My old story:**A more accurate story:**

Answers: facts are a, c and f; interpretations are b, d and e.

2

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 2

REWRITING YOUR LANGUAGE LEARNING STORY

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 3 · PUT YOUR BELIEFS ON TRIAL

TRY THIS

15 minutes

THREE BELIEFS ON TRIAL

Choose the three beliefs that hold you back most. For each one, answer the four questions. "I feel it" doesn't count as evidence: look for things that happened.

THE BELIEF	EVIDENCE IT'S TRUE	EVIDENCE AGAINST IT	WHAT I'D TELL A FRIEND
<i>I should be fluent by now.</i>	<i>I still make mistakes and lose words.</i>	<i>I use English at work every day. I've had maybe 200 hours of speaking.</i>	<i>You're doing well for the practice you've had.</i>

A more accurate belief I can carry instead:

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

2

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 2

REWRITING YOUR LANGUAGE LEARNING STORY

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 4 · YOUR INNER CRITIC IS QUOTING SOMEONE

TRY THIS

15 minutes

YOUR CRITIC'S GREATEST HITS

Every inner critic has a set of favourite lines it plays on repeat. Write down the three it plays most often about your English. Then ask: whose voice does this sound like? Finally, rewrite each line as you'd say it to a good friend in the same situation.

THE CRITIC'S LINE	WHOSE VOICE?	MY BEST-FRIEND VERSION

Copy your three friend versions onto a card or into your phone. When the critic starts up before a conversation, read them. With practice, the new lines start to arrive on their own.

Adapted from Shaun Simpson, *Why Should I Give a Monkey's?* (2024).

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

REWRITING YOUR LANGUAGE LEARNING STORY

Name

Date

POINT 5 · KINDNESS ISN'T GOING SOFT

This week · one conversation

- 1 Before.** Choose one low-stakes English conversation. Tell yourself, using your name: "*[Name], you'll make some mistakes today, and that's fine. You won't replay them afterwards.*"
- 2 During.** When you slip, correct it only if it changes the meaning. Otherwise, carry on.
- 3 After.** Take the three-step break from Figure 2.5. Then write one thing you did well and one thing you learned. Not a list of errors: that's the old pattern.

One thing I did well:

One thing I learned:

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

2

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 2

REWRITING YOUR LANGUAGE LEARNING STORY

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 6 · TELL YOUR STORY IN YOUR OWN WORDS

TRY THIS

15 minutes

WRITE YOUR NEW STORY

Write one paragraph, in English, about your learning journey. Include when you started, one moment that shaped you, how your beliefs are changing, and where you are now. Use at least three of the four past forms from Figure 2.6. Then read it aloud to yourself.

Useful starters: When I first started learning... · I remember feeling... · I used to believe... but now I think... · At the time, I thought... · Looking back, I realise... · I'm learning to...

Keep it somewhere you'll see it. Read it when old beliefs come back, and rewrite it as your story changes.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

3

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 3 MISTAKES ARE DATA, NOT DISASTERS

Name _____

Date _____

QUICK CHECK

1 minute

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MISTAKES

Answer honestly. There's no score that matters here except your own.

STATEMENT	YES	NO
After making a mistake in English, I often replay it in my head for the rest of the day.		
I'd rather stay quiet than risk saying something grammatically wrong.		
I judge my English ability mainly by how few errors I make, not by whether I was understood.		
I assume native speakers notice and silently judge most of my mistakes.		
I've avoided a conversation, email, or opportunity specifically because I was afraid of getting the English wrong.		

Three or more "yes" answers? This may be one of the most useful chapters in the book for you. One or none? You may already have a fairly healthy relationship with error, and can move a little faster through the explanations and spend your time on the exercises.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

3

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 3 MISTAKES ARE DATA, NOT DISASTERS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 1 · YOUR ENGLISH IS A BUILDING, NOT A TEST PAPER

TRY THIS

5 minutes

DRAW YOUR OWN BUILDING

Fill in the floors of your English as it is today. Put what you use comfortably at the bottom, and what's still under construction near the top. There are no wrong answers.

FLOOR	WHAT'S ON THIS FLOOR FOR ME
Top: still being designed	
Scaffolding: being built now	
Scaffolding: being built now	
Finished: in daily use	
Finished: in daily use	

Next time you make a mistake on a scaffolding floor, you'll know it for what it is: a floor still being built, not a crack in the foundations.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

3

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 3

MISTAKES ARE DATA, NOT DISASTERS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 2 · FOUR KINDS OF MISTAKE, FOUR DIFFERENT FIXES

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

One week

THE ERROR COLLECTION

For one week, become a collector of your own mistakes: not to shame yourself, but to study them. Each time you notice one, write it down with its correction, the situation, and its type. Aim for ten.

WHAT I SAID	CORRECT FORM	SITUATION · WAS I UNDERSTOOD?	TYPE
<i>I am living here since 2019.</i>	<i>I have been living here since 2019.</i>	<i>Chat with colleague, relaxed. Fully understood.</i>	<i>Dev.</i>

At the end of the week, count. Which type comes up most? How many of your mistakes actually stopped the other person understanding you? For most of my students, the answer to the second question is "almost none".

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

3

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 3

MISTAKES ARE DATA, NOT DISASTERS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 3 · MISTAKES AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS AREN'T THE SAME THING

TRY THIS

1 minute · after any mistake

THE FIVE-TO-FIVE TEST

Think of a mistake that's bothering you right now. Tick how long it will genuinely matter, to the person you were speaking to.

WILL THIS MATTER IN...	5 MINUTES	5 HOURS	5 DAYS	5 WEEKS	5 YEARS
My mistake:					

Then use the scorecard below for your next three conversations. Notice what's missing: there's no box for counting mistakes.

AFTER THE CONVERSATION	1	2	3
Did they understand my main message?			
Did I get done what I needed to?			
Did I keep going after a mistake?			
One thing that went well			

Adapted from Shaun Simpson, *Why Should I Give a Monkey's?* (2024).

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

3

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 3 MISTAKES ARE DATA, NOT DISASTERS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 4 · FIX IT IN ONE BREATH AND KEEP GOING

TRY THIS

3 minutes, with a partner or a recording

DELIBERATE IMPERFECTION

This one feels strange, and it works. Choose an easy topic (your job, your town, your weekend) and speak for three minutes. On purpose, make three small mistakes, catch each one, repair it with a phrase from the table, and carry on without stopping.

TO CORRECT YOURSELF	REGISTER
Sorry, I meant... · Let me correct that...	neutral
I go... went to the meeting.	neutral
TO REPHRASE	
In other words... · To put it another way...	neutral
What I'm trying to say is...	neutral
TO CHECK, INSTEAD OF APOLOGISING	
Does that make sense? · Am I being clear?	neutral
Know what I mean?	informal
TO NAME THE DIFFICULTY, BRIEFLY	
I'm not sure I have the exact word for this, but...	neutral
This is a tricky idea in my own language too.	neutral

Did the world end? What actually happened when you made the mistakes on purpose?

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

3

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 3

MISTAKES ARE DATA, NOT DISASTERS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 5 · FLUENT ENOUGH TO DO WHAT YOU NEED

TRY THIS

10 minutes

YOUR PROFILE, AND YOUR OWN MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Shade each bar to show where you are now. Then answer the questions below. This is your own definition of success: come back to it once a month.

DIMENSION	LOW ←————→ HIGH
Speed	
Accuracy	
Strategic	
Confidence	
Articulation	

What do I actually need English for? (Be specific.)

What would "successful" look like in those situations?

How will I know I'm improving, without counting mistakes?

YOUR PERSONALISED CONFIDENCE PLAN

Name

Date

POINT 1 · THREE CONDITIONS, AND MOST PEOPLE CHASE ONE

TRY THIS

5 minutes

RATE YOUR THREE CONDITIONS

Think about the English practice you do now. Rate each condition honestly, out of ten: not where you'd like it to be, but where it is.

CONDITION	OUT OF 10	ONE CHANGE THAT WOULD RAISE IT
Comprehensible input I understand most of what I read and hear		
Low anxiety My practice feels safe enough to think		
Frequent practice I use English most days, even briefly		

Your lowest score is where your plan should start. For most readers of this book, it's the middle one.

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

4

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 4

YOUR PERSONALISED CONFIDENCE PLAN

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 2 · FIND THE SWEET SPOT BETWEEN EASY AND IMPOSSIBLE

TRY THIS

This week

MOVE ONE THING INTO THE SWEET SPOT

List the English you currently read, watch and listen to. Estimate how much of each you follow. Then make one swap: replace something in the "too hard" zone with something in the learning zone, ideally on a subject you already enjoy.

WHAT I READ, WATCH OR LISTEN TO	HOW MUCH I FOLLOW	KEEP, ADJUST OR SWAP?

Easy adjustments: turn on English subtitles (not your own language's); slow a podcast to 0.9x; choose the BBC's programmes for learners, or news written at your level; re-watch a series you already know in your own language.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

4

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 4

YOUR PERSONALISED CONFIDENCE PLAN

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 3 · PRACTISE WHERE IT'S SAFE TO GET IT WRONG

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

15 minutes

YOUR PRACTICE INVENTORY

List everything you currently do in English: work, social, media, study. For each, note the anxiety it creates, whether it actually helps your confidence, and which ring of Figure 4.3 it belongs to.

ACTIVITY	HOW OFTEN	ANXIETY 1-10	HELPS? Y/N	RING
<i>Team meetings</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>N, too anxious to speak</i>	<i>High pressure</i>
<i>Subtitled series</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Solo</i>

Look at the pattern. Are you forcing yourself through high-anxiety activities that aren't helping, while missing the middle rings altogether? Most people find at least one empty ring. Write one option for each ring you can actually access:

Solo:

Peers:

Kind native speakers:

YOUR PERSONALISED CONFIDENCE PLAN

Date _____

10 minutes

28

4

PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS · CHAPTER 4

YOUR PERSONALISED CONFIDENCE PLAN

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 5 · FOUR WEEKS, NOT FOREVER

TRY THIS

4 weeks

THE FOUR-WEEK TRACKER

Tick each day you do your planned practice. Aim for about 80%, not 100%. At the end of each week, write one line: what worked, and what you'll adjust.

WEEK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	WHAT WORKED · WHAT I'LL ADJUST
1								
2								
3								
4								

Before you close this chapter, put your first session in your calendar: a day, a time, and one activity from your plan. Then tell one person what you're doing. A friend, a colleague, a study partner: someone who will ask how it's going.

My first session:

The person I'll tell:

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

CHAPTERS 5-9 · READ IN THE ORDER YOUR LIFE NEEDS

PART TWO

PRACTICE STRATEGIES

Step by step, from other learners to everyday exchanges, high-stakes moments and the written word.

05	Speaking with fellow learners	5 sheets
06	The graduated exposure method	6 sheets
07	Speaking with native speakers (low stakes)	5 sheets
08	Speaking with native speakers (high stakes)	6 sheets
09	Written communication confidence	5 sheets

5

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 5

SPEAKING WITH FELLOW LEARNERS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 1 · WHY OTHER LEARNERS FEEL SAFER

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

10 minutes

FIND FIVE POSSIBLE PRACTICE PARTNERS

Look around your life for other learners. Aim for five names or places: they don't all need to work out.

WHERE TO LOOK	POSSIBLE PARTNER OR GROUP	FIRST STEP
Work or study	<i>Ana in accounts, also learning</i>	<i>Ask at lunch</i>
Work or study		
Your community		
Online		
A class you attend		
Friends of friends		

Try before you commit. One or two trial sessions will tell you whether a partnership feels right. Look for a similar level of commitment, compatible goals and mutual respect. If it doesn't work, it's perfectly fine to say so: "I don't think this is quite right for me, but thank you."

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

5

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 5

SPEAKING WITH FELLOW LEARNERS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 2 · YOU'RE COMPARING YOUR INSIDE WITH THEIR OUTSIDE

TRY THIS

One week

THE COMPARISON LOG

For one week, note each time you catch yourself comparing your English with someone else's. Then do a quick reality check.

WHO AND WHAT I COMPARED	WHAT I COULDN'T SEE	DID IT HELP ME?	A FAIRER COMPARISON
<i>Priya talks so easily in meetings</i>	<i>She's presented weekly for five years</i>	<i>No. I went quiet</i>	<i>Me now vs me in January</i>

Have a reply ready. When the thought comes, try: "That's their journey. Mine started somewhere else." Or simply: "Compared with when?" At the end of the week, count how many comparisons actually helped you, and how many just made you feel worse.

Adapted from Shaun Simpson, *Why Should I Give a Monkey's?* (2024).

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

SPEAKING WITH FELLOW LEARNERS

Date

After your next 3 conversations

Straight after a conversation in English, rate how much you think the other person enjoyed it. Then look for real evidence: did they smile, ask questions, keep talking, suggest meeting again?

CONVERSATION	MY GUESS (1-10)	EVIDENCE THEY ENJOYED IT	FAIRER SCORE

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

5

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 5

SPEAKING WITH FELLOW LEARNERS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 4 · SAFE GROUPS ARE BUILT, NOT FOUND

TRY THIS

At your first session

AGREE YOUR FEEDBACK RULES

Choose one option together, and revisit it every month.

OPTION	HOW IT WORKS	OUR CHOICE
No correction during flow	The focus is fluency. Nobody corrects while someone is speaking.	
Delayed correction	Five minutes of "feedback time" at the end. Note things down as you go.	
Clarification only	Only interrupt when you genuinely don't understand.	
Ask for it	Each person says at the start how much correction they want today.	

Three habits our group will keep:

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

5

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 5

SPEAKING WITH FELLOW LEARNERS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 5 · A LITTLE STRUCTURE, A LOT LESS FEAR

TRY THIS

20 minutes, with one partner

YOUR FIRST PEER SESSION

Run a short session using timed turns. Each person draws or chooses a topic, speaks for three minutes, then answers two questions. Swap. Choose one conversation skill to practise from the table, and use it on purpose.

Topic ideas: the best meal you've ever had · a place you'd love to show someone · a skill you'd like to learn · the worst job you've ever done · what you'd do with a free day · a tradition from where you grew up.

TAKING YOUR TURN	REGISTER
Can I add something to that? · That reminds me of...	neutral
SHOWING YOU'RE LISTENING	
Really? Tell me more. · That must have been...	neutral
No way! · Seriously?	informal
KEEPING IT GOING	
What happened next? · How did you feel about that?	neutral
Speaking of which... · On a related note...	neutral
WHEN YOU DON'T FOLLOW	
Sorry, I didn't catch that last part. · What do you mean by...?	neutral

The skill I practised, and what I noticed:

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

6

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 6

THE GRADUATED EXPOSURE METHOD

Name _____

Date _____

QUICK CHECK

1 minute

IS THIS METHOD RIGHT FOR YOUR SITUATION?

This method works best for specific situations rather than general worry. Tick the statements that are true.

STATEMENT	✓
I can name a specific situation (not "talking to people" but "asking my manager a question in a meeting").	
I currently avoid it, or get through it with real dread.	
I'll realistically face it again, more than once.	
I can imagine a slightly easier version of it.	
My anxiety about it is mainly about English, not part of a much wider pattern across my life.	

Mostly ticks? This chapter is a strong fit. If your anxiety feels constant and not tied to particular situations, the chapter will still help, but please also read Appendix G on finding professional support.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

THE GRADUATED EXPOSURE METHOD

Date

5 minutes

37

6

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 6

THE GRADUATED EXPOSURE METHOD

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 2 · ONE MANAGEABLE RUNG AT A TIME

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

20 minutes

BUILD YOUR OWN LADDER

Use your Trigger Map from Chapter 1. Choose one goal at the top: the situation you most want to be able to handle. Then fill in eight to ten rungs below it, each a little easier. Rate each one.

RUNG	SPECIFIC SITUATION	ANXIETY 1-10	DONE ✓
10	<i>My goal:</i>		
9			
8			
7			
6			
5			
4			
3			
2			
1			

Start where the rating is about 4. If even your lowest rung feels like an 8, add easier ones underneath: recording yourself, writing it first, doing it with a friend beside you.

6

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 6

THE GRADUATED EXPOSURE METHOD

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 3 · EACH RUNG IS AN EXPERIMENT

TRY THIS

Before and after each rung

THE PREDICTION SHEET

Fill in one line for each rung you attempt. Then keep a simple tally: every time the alarm's prediction comes true, and every time it doesn't.

RUNG	I PREDICT...	BELIEF %	WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED	BELIEF NOW

THE ALARM WAS RIGHT	THE ALARM WAS WRONG

After a few weeks, the tally becomes powerful evidence. When the alarm makes its next prediction, you can look at its track record.

Adapted from Shaun Simpson, *Why Should I Give a Monkey's?* (2024).

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

THE GRADUATED EXPOSURE METHOD

Date _____

On your next rung

40

6

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 6

THE GRADUATED EXPOSURE METHOD

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 5 · PREPARE IN THREE WAYS, THEN GO

TRY THIS

Weeks 1 to 3

YOUR FIRST THREE RUNGS

Plan and complete one rung a week. Repeat each two or three times if you can before moving up.

	RUNG 1	RUNG 2	RUNG 3
Practical			
Physical			
Psych.			
Key phrases			
Anxiety before / during / after			
What went better than expected			

Key phrases. Spend ten minutes saying aloud the language each rung will need. For a phone call: "Hello, this is... calling about...", "I'm having trouble with...", "Could you spell that for me?" For a meeting: "From my perspective...", "Can I add something?", "What I mean is..."

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

NATIVE SPEAKERS: LOW STAKES

Date _____

After 3 everyday exchanges

After three short exchanges this week (a shop, a café, a bus), write down any real evidence that the other person was judging your English. Then write down what they actually seemed focused on.

WHERE	EVIDENCE THEY JUDGED MY ENGLISH	WHAT THEY SEEMED FOCUSED ON
<i>Bakery</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>The queue; a delivery arriving</i>

SPEAK ENGLISH WITHOUT THE ANXIETY · WORKSHEETS · [ATTENGLISH.COM/ANXIETY-TOOL/WORKSHEETS](https://attenglish.com/anxiety-tool/worksheets)

7

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 7

NATIVE SPEAKERS: LOW STAKES

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 2 · THE BEST PRACTICE YOU'RE WALKING PAST

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

10 minutes

YOUR LOW-STAKES INVENTORY

Tick every low-stakes interaction you already have access to, or could create. Aim for eight to ten.

INTERACTION	✓	WHERE, SPECIFICALLY?
Buying coffee or food		
Shopping (a real till, not self-checkout)		
Gym, pool or leisure centre		
Public transport questions		
Neighbours		
Online forums or comments		
Customer service calls		
The library		
Small talk with acquaintances		
Asking strangers for directions		

NATIVE SPEAKERS: LOW STAKES

Date _____

POINT 3 · EVERY SHORT EXCHANGE FOLLOWS A SCRIPT

Over two weeks

FIVE MICRO-CONVERSATIONS

Choose five exchanges from your inventory, from easiest to hardest. Before each: two sighs, and a look at the phrases you'll need. After each: fill in one line.

EXCHANGE	NERVES BEFORE	NERVES AFTER	DID I GET WHAT I NEEDED?	ONE SURPRISE

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

NATIVE SPEAKERS: LOW STAKES

Name

Date _____

POINT 4 · PARTNERS, NOT LANGUAGE POLICE

TRY THIS

5 minutes a day

Cover the right-hand column. Read each moment and say a phrase aloud before you look. Then make your own cards for the moments you meet most.

THE MOMENT	TRY SAYING
The barista asks something you didn't catch	Sorry, what was that?
The receptionist is speaking very fast	Could you slow down a little, please?
You've been given the wrong change	Excuse me, I think there's been a mistake.
The order isn't what you asked for	Sorry, this isn't quite what I ordered.
You can't find something in a shop	Excuse me, where would I find...?
A shop assistant offers help	I'm just looking, thanks.
Someone says something about the weather	I know! Terrible, isn't it?
You need to check an instruction	Just to confirm, you'd like me to...?
My own moment:	
My own moment:	

NOTES : WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

[illegible]

7

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 7

NATIVE SPEAKERS: LOW STAKES

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 5 · BLUNTNESS ISN'T ALWAYS ABOUT YOU

TRY THIS

Four weeks

INTERRUPT ONE AVOIDANCE HABIT

Ola's turning point came because the self-checkouts were broken. You don't need to wait for an accident. Choose one small avoidance habit and break it on purpose, every week, for four weeks.

My avoidance habit (e.g. self-checkout, ordering apps, texting instead of calling):

What I'll do instead:

WEEK	DONE ✓	NERVES (1–10)	WHAT HAPPENED
1			
2			
3			
4			

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

NATIVE SPEAKERS: HIGH STAKES

Name

Date

QUICK CHECK

1 minute

WHAT'S YOUR PREPARATION STYLE?

Think of your last genuinely high-stakes English situation: an interview, a big presentation, an important meeting. Which of these was closest to true?

A	I wrote out full answers or scripts in advance and tried to remember them closely, even in moments that didn't go to plan.
B	I did little or no preparation, telling myself I'd just "wing it" on the day.
C	I prepared key points and ideas, practised expressing them a few different ways, and accepted I'd need to adapt.
D	I prepared so much, for so long, that I felt mentally exhausted before the event even started.

A or D? Point 1 is written for you. **B?** Go straight to the plan in Point 2. **C?** You're already close to what this chapter recommends; Points 3 to 5 will help you refine it.

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

8

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 8

NATIVE SPEAKERS: HIGH STAKES

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 1 · MORE PREPARATION ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER

TRY THIS

2 minutes

YOUR "STOP" LIST

Before your next high-stakes situation, tick the things you will *not* do.

I WILL NOT...	✓
memorise more than my opening and closing word for word	
try to predict every possible question	
rehearse until it sounds robotic, or until I'm exhausted	
prepare only alone, without saying it out loud to anyone	
keep preparing in the final 24 hours (a quick look at my notes is fine)	
research far beyond what's actually useful	

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

8

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 8

NATIVE SPEAKERS: HIGH STAKES

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 2 · PREPARE A MAP, NOT A SCRIPT

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

30–45 minutes

YOUR HIGH-STAKES PLAN

Choose a real situation in the next month and fill this in.

MY PLAN	
The situation	
3–5 core messages ideas, not sentences	
My opening word for word	
My closing word for word	
Questions they'll probably ask	
My plan if I lose a word	
When I'll stop preparing	

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

NATIVE SPEAKERS: HIGH STAKES

Date

50

NATIVE SPEAKERS: HIGH STAKES

Date

The hour before

8

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 5 · HOW YOU RECOVER MATTERS MORE THAN THE SLIP

TRY THIS

At least twice before the real thing

THE RECORDED MOCK

Ask a friend or colleague to play the interviewer, chair or audience. Give them two or three unexpected questions to throw in. Record it, and watch it back *once*: not to find faults, but to notice what you did when the script broke.

USEFUL IN INTERVIEWS	REGISTER
In my previous role, I was responsible for...	formal
The challenge was... and my approach was...	formal
Could you tell me a little more about what you're looking for?	formal
USEFUL IN PRESENTATIONS	
Thank you for the opportunity to present today.	formal
Moving on to the next point... · What's particularly important here is...	neutral
USEFUL IN MEETINGS	
I'd like to suggest... · I see it slightly differently.	neutral
That's worth considering. Let me come back to you on that.	formal
USEFUL FOR RECOVERY	
Let me put that another way. · Sorry, I've lost my thread. Where was I? Yes...	neutral

When the script broke, what did I do?

One thing to keep, one thing to change:

9

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 9

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION CONFIDENCE

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 1 · WHY WRITING CAN FEEL RISKIER THAN SPEAKING

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

One week

YOUR WRITING AUDIT

For one week, log every piece of English writing you produce: emails, messages, documents. Be honest about the time.

WHAT I WROTE	MINUTES SPENT	TIMES REWRITTEN	ANXIETY 1-10	DID IT REALLY NEED THAT MUCH CARE?
<i>Two-line reply to a colleague</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>No. They replied "Great, thanks!"</i>

At the end of the week, add up the minutes. Many of my students find they spend hours a week on messages that needed minutes.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION CONFIDENCE

Date

5 minutes · no exceptions

9

PART TWO · PRACTICE STRATEGIES · CHAPTER 9

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION CONFIDENCE

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 3 · MATCH THE EFFORT TO THE MESSAGE

TRY THIS

10 minutes

YOUR OWN GOOD-ENOUGH RULES

Write your own rules for the kinds of writing you do most. Keep them by your desk.

TYPE OF WRITING	GOOD ENOUGH MEANS...	TIME LIMIT	READ-THROUGHS
<i>Reply to a colleague</i>	<i>They understand what I mean; polite</i>	<i>5 min</i>	<i>1</i>

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

9

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION CONFIDENCE

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 4 · BORROW THE PHRASE, SKIP THE AGONISING

TRY THIS

20 minutes, once

BUILD YOUR PHRASE BANK AND THREE TEMPLATES

Choose the three types of email you write most often (a request, an update, a reply to a question...) and write a short template for each, using the parts in Figure 9.4. Then add phrases from the table to your bank.

PURPOSE	PHRASE	REGISTER
Asking	Would it be possible to...? · I was wondering if you could...	neutral
Following up	Just following up on my email about... · Any update on...?	neutral
Apologising	Sorry for the slow reply. · Apologies for any inconvenience.	neutral
Disagreeing	I see it slightly differently. · I have a couple of concerns about...	neutral
Clarifying	Just to clarify... · Could you explain what you mean by...?	neutral
Attaching	Please find attached... · I've attached...	formal
Closing	Let me know if you need anything else. · I look forward to hearing from you.	neutral
Signing off	Many thanks · Kind regards · Best wishes · Cheers (informal)	varies

Template 1:

Template 2:

Template 3:

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION CONFIDENCE

Date

TRY THIS

Two weeks

THE IMPERFECT SENDING CHALLENGE

Over the next two weeks, send ten routine messages without checking for small errors beyond one quick read. Then watch the replies. Keep a tally.

REPLIES THAT MENTIONED AN ERROR	REPLIES THAT JUST ANSWERED MY MESSAGE

Recipients almost never notice small errors, and even more rarely care, as long as they've understood you. Your tally is your evidence.

CHAPTERS 10–12 · THE CHAPTERS YOU COME BACK TO

PART THREE

LONG-TERM GROWTH

Handle the dips, build English into your life for good, and see how far you have come.

10	When anxiety returns	5 sheets
11	Building your English learning ecosystem	5 sheets
12	Celebrating your growth	4 sheets

10

PART THREE · LONG-TERM GROWTH · CHAPTER 10

WHEN ANXIETY RETURNS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 1 · PROGRESS IS A JAGGED LINE, NOT A STRAIGHT ONE

TRY THIS

10 minutes

DRAW YOUR OWN LINE

Sketch your English confidence over the last six months (or since you started this book). Mark your lowest point, your highest point, and where you are now. Next to each low point, write what was happening in your life at the time.



What was happening at my lowest point?

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

WHEN ANXIETY RETURNS

Name

Date _____

POINT 2 · A DIP IS NOT A RETURN TO THE START

TRY THIS

3 minutes

Tick the right column for each example. (Answers at the foot of the box.) Then think of your own most recent dip, and decide.

EXAMPLE	SETBACK	REGRESSION
a. A new manager arrives and you go quiet in meetings for a fortnight.		
b. For four months, you've avoided English everywhere and nothing helps.		
c. During exam season you freeze more, but the sigh still takes the edge off.		
d. After a bad cold, phone calls feel harder for a week.		

My most recent dip, and which column it belongs in:

Answers: a, c and d are temporary setbacks; b looks like genuine regression, and is worth talking to someone about.

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 3 · NOTICE THE DIP BEFORE IT BECOMES A SLIDE

TRY THIS

Once a month

YOUR WARNING-SIGN CHECK

Tick anything that's been true for you over the last week or two. Three or more ticks? That's your signal to open your setback plan (Point 5) now, not later.

SIGN	✓	SIGN	✓
Avoiding a situation I used to handle		Old disaster predictions returning	
Using more safety behaviours		All-or-nothing thinking	
Delaying communication I need to send		Comparing myself more than usual	
Higher baseline anxiety		Harsher self-criticism	
More intense physical symptoms		Discounting progress I've made	
Taking longer to recover		Catastrophising about the future	

My earliest, most reliable signs:

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

WHEN ANXIETY RETURNS

Name

Date

POINT 4 · ONE BAD WEEK DOESN'T CANCEL SIX GOOD MONTHS

2 minutes · in the moment

For the moment the critic attacks hardest, after a bad meeting or a call that went wrong.

- 1 Stop and breathe.** Two physiological sighs.
- 2 Name it.** "This is the critic again." Some students give theirs a name. It's much harder to take "Derek" seriously.
- 3 Question it.** Is this helpful? Would I say this to a friend? What's the actual evidence?

WILL THIS MATTER IN...	5 MINUTES	5 HOURS	5 DAYS	5 WEEKS	5 YEARS

Then do something small and kind: make a proper cup of tea, text a friend, go for a ten-minute walk, read your "new story" from Chapter 2.

Adapted from Shaun Simpson, *Why Should I Give a Monkey's?* (2024).

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

10

PART THREE · LONG-TERM GROWTH · CHAPTER 10

WHEN ANXIETY RETURNS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 5 · WRITE THE PLAN WHILE YOU'RE FEELING WELL

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

20 minutes, now

WRITE YOUR SETBACK CARD

1 · My early warning signs	
2 · What usually triggers a dip	
3 · Back to basics: three things that have helped me before	
4 · Who I can talk to	
5 · Proof I've done this before situations I've handled, progress I've made	

Rehearse it once. Read the card aloud and imagine using it next time a meeting goes badly. Then copy it somewhere you'll see it.

TALKING ABOUT A HARD PATCH WITHOUT CATASTROPHISING	REGISTER
I'm finding this harder than usual at the moment.	neutral
It's been a tough week, but I'm working through it.	neutral
I'd appreciate a bit of patience while I find my feet with the new team.	formal
Bit of a wobble this week, nothing major.	informal

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

11

PART THREE · LONG-TERM GROWTH · CHAPTER 11 BUILDING YOUR ENGLISH LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 1 · SMALL AND OFTEN BEATS BIG AND RARE

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

One week

YOUR WEEKLY ENGLISH AUDIT

For one week, note every contact you have with English, however small: a podcast, a work email, a recipe, a chat. You'll sort them into tiers in Point 2.

ACTIVITY	MINUTES	ENJOYED IT? 1-5	TIER (M / G / C)

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

11

PART THREE · LONG-TERM GROWTH · CHAPTER 11 BUILDING YOUR ENGLISH LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 3 · ENJOYMENT IS FUEL, NOT A LUXURY

TRY THIS

15 minutes

YOUR INTEREST MAP

List five things you're genuinely interested in, in any language. For each, find one way to do it partly in English.

MY INTEREST	AN ENGLISH WAY TO DO IT	TIER
<i>Gardening</i>	<i>The RHS website; a gardening forum; Gardeners' World on BBC iPlayer</i>	<i>Maintenance</i>

Easy switches: phone and apps set to English · subtitles in English · podcasts on topics you love · recipes, match reports or game guides in English · one English-language online community for a hobby.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

PART THREE · LONG-TERM GROWTH · CHAPTER 11

BUILDING YOUR ENGLISH LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

Name

Date _____

POINT 4 · CHOICE, PROGRESS AND PEOPLE

TRY THIS

10 minutes

BUILD YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM

Choice: one activity I'm doing only because I "should", and what I'd rather do instead	
Progress: how I'll see that I'm improving (a monthly recording, my ladder, my log)	
People: one person or group to practise with, and one person who'll ask how it's going	
A community to join: online or in person, linked to an interest	

Joining a community gently: watch and read for a week or two first. Then add one small contribution: a "thanks, this helped", a short question. Increase slowly, like a ladder.

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

11

PART THREE · LONG-TERM GROWTH · CHAPTER 11 BUILDING YOUR ENGLISH LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 5 · A PLAN WITH A FLOOR, NOT JUST A CEILING

TRY THIS

15 minutes

PLAN YOUR NEXT THREE MONTHS

Month one one focus	
Month two add one thing	
Month three a small stretch	
My floor the minimum	
Review date	

TALKING ABOUT YOUR ROUTINE

REGISTER

I usually... · I tend to... · Most days, I...

neutral

I've got into the habit of... (US English: *I've gotten into...*)

neutral

I try to fit in... · I make time for...

neutral

I'm trying to cut down on... · I've started...

neutral

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

12

PART THREE · LONG-TERM GROWTH · CHAPTER 12

CELEBRATING YOUR GROWTH

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 1 · YOUR BRAIN HIDES YOUR PROGRESS FROM YOU

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

20 minutes

YOUR BEFORE-AND-AFTER INVENTORY

Find your Trigger Map from Chapter 1. For each situation, write your original rating and your rating today. Then note what's changed: not just the number, but what you now do differently.

SITUATION	THEN	NOW	WHAT'S CHANGED

Watch for the minimiser. When a voice says "That doesn't count" or "Anyone could do that", write the change down anyway. All change counts. Lesson 12 draws your before-and-after bars for you.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

12

PART THREE · LONG-TERM GROWTH · CHAPTER 12

CELEBRATING YOUR GROWTH

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 2 · SMALL WINS ARE THE ONES THAT MATTER MOST

TRY THIS

20 minutes, then daily

YOUR ACHIEVEMENT LIST, AND A DAILY VICTORY LOG

Write at least twenty things you've achieved since you started this book, large and small. Use Figure 12.2 for ideas. Lesson 12 counts them for you.

1		11	
2		12	
3		13	
4		14	
5		15	
6		16	
7		17	
8		18	
9		19	
10		20	

Then keep it going. Each evening for the next fortnight, write down one English win from the day, however small. On the hard days, "I didn't avoid it" counts.

Adapted from Shaun Simpson, *Why Should I Give a Monkey's?* (2024).

CELEBRATING YOUR GROWTH

Name

Date

POINT 3 · LISTEN TO THE PERSON YOU WERE

15 minutes

- 1 Record the new one first.** Same question: *Describe a time you felt nervous about using English. What happened? How did you feel?*
- 2 Listen to both.** Notice pauses, repairs, how quickly you recover, how much you say.
- 3 Ask two or three people** who've known you through this time: "What have you noticed about how I use English?" Write their answers down word for word.

Complete five of these: "I used to... Now I..."

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

12

PART THREE · LONG-TERM GROWTH · CHAPTER 12

CELEBRATING YOUR GROWTH

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 4 · WHAT'S NEXT, WITHOUT THE PRESSURE

TRY THIS

20 minutes

INTENTIONS AND A LETTER

Write two or three intentions for the next three to six months: what you'd like to feel or be able to do, and what you'll keep doing to get there.

Intention 1:

Intention 2:

Intention 3:

Then write a short letter to yourself, to be opened in six months. What do you hope future-you will have done? What do you want them to remember on a hard day? What are you proud of right now? Seal it, date it, and put a reminder in your calendar.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

CHAPTERS 13–18 • IN ANY ORDER, WHENEVER YOU NEED THEM

PART FOUR

GOING FURTHER

Six new chapters for the situations readers ask about most once the programme is done.

13	Accent, identity and sounding like yourself	5 sheets
14	Phone and video calls	5 sheets
15	Small talk, humour and British culture	5 sheets
16	When you can't understand them	5 sheets
17	Speaking tests and interviews	5 sheets
18	Helping someone else speak	5 sheets

13

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 13 ACCENT, IDENTITY AND SOUNDING LIKE YOURSELF

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 1 · EVERYONE HAS AN ACCENT, INCLUDING THE BRITISH

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

Two weeks

THE REPEAT LOG

For two weeks, every time someone asks you to repeat something, write down the word or phrase. Not the times you *worry* they didn't understand: only the times they actually asked.

WHAT I SAID	WHAT THEY HEARD, OR SEEMED TO HEAR	WAS IT NOISY, OR FAST?

Look at the list. Most people find it's much shorter than they feared, and that the same two or three words keep appearing. Those are your targets. Everything else can stay exactly as it is.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

13

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 13

ACCENT, IDENTITY AND SOUNDING LIKE YOURSELF

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 2 · WORK ON THE FEW THINGS THAT MATTER MOST

TRY THIS

5 minutes a day

STRESS FIRST

Say each word aloud, making the CAPITAL syllable longer, louder and higher. Then add the words from your repeat log, and mark where you think the stress goes; check them in a dictionary.

WORD FAMILY	SAY IT
photograph · photographer · photographic	PHOtograph · pho-TO-grapher · photo-GRAPH-ic
economy · economic · economist	e-CON-omy · eco-NOM-ic · e-CON-omist
develop · development	de-VEL-op · de-VEL-opment
comfortable · vegetable	COMF-ta-ble · VEJ-ta-ble
My own:	
My own:	

Then say one tongue twister three times: slowly, then at normal speed, then fast. For example: "A *proper copper coffee pot*." Laughing at the fast version is allowed, and encouraged.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

ACCENT, IDENTITY AND SOUNDING LIKE YOURSELF

Name

Date _____

POINT 3 · "I DON'T FEEL LIKE ME IN ENGLISH"

15 minutes

Think about how people who know you well in your own language would describe you: funny? kind? direct? curious? Choose two qualities. For each, find three English phrases that let that side of you come through, and practise them this week.

MY QUALITY	THREE PHRASES THAT SHOW IT IN ENGLISH
Warm	"Oh, that's lovely to hear." · "How are you getting on?" · "Let me know if I can help at all."
Dry humour	"Well, that went well." · "Living the dream." · "Could be worse: could be raining. Oh, it is."

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

ACCENT, IDENTITY AND SOUNDING LIKE YOURSELF

Date _____

TRY THIS

5 minutes

Prepare one friendly, easy reply to each, so the question becomes a chance to connect rather than a moment to dread.

THEY SAY	YOU COULD SAY
Where are you from?	Colombia, originally. I've been in Bristol three years now. Have you ever been?
Your English is really good!	Thank you! Still learning, but I'm getting there.
Sorry, say that again?	Of course: [say it a little more slowly].
What language do you speak at home?	Spanish, mostly. My kids answer in English, though!
My own version:	

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 13

ACCENT, IDENTITY AND SOUNDING LIKE YOURSELF

Name

Date _____

POINT 5 · THIRTY DAYS WITH YOUR OWN VOICE

30 days

- 1 Record once a day**, about anything: your day, a plan, something you read. Start at thirty seconds; build to two minutes.
- 2 Don't listen back during the week.** On Sundays, listen to one recording from that week, and write one thing you liked about how you sounded.
- 3 On day 30**, listen to day 1 and day 30 together.

Something I liked about how I sounded:

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

14

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 14

PHONE AND VIDEO CALLS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 1 · YOU'VE LOST HALF OF WHAT HELPS YOU UNDERSTAND

TRY THIS

5 minutes

YOUR CALL AUDIT

List the calls you make or avoid. For each, note what makes it hard, so you can target the right fix in the rest of this chapter.

CALL	ANXIETY 1-10	WHAT MAKES IT HARD (SPEED? ACCENT? NAMES AND NUMBERS? NOT KNOWING WHAT THEY'LL ASK?)
<i>Ringling a supplier</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>They talk fast; I have to catch order numbers</i>

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

14

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 14

PHONE AND VIDEO CALLS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 2 · EVERY CALL HAS A SHAPE. PLAN THE SHAPE.

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

5 minutes before every call

THE CALL CARD

Before your next call, fill in a card like this and keep it in front of you. Notes aren't cheating: almost everyone uses them on work calls.

My opening line	
2–3 key points	
Names, numbers, references I'll need	
What they'll probably ask me	
What I need to check before I hang up	
My closing line	

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

14

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 14

PHONE AND VIDEO CALLS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 3 · NAMES, NUMBERS AND THE ART OF ASKING AGAIN

TRY THIS

10 minutes

SPELL IT, SAY IT BACK

- 1 **Practise your own details** until they're automatic: your name, email address and postcode, letter by letter with the phonetic alphabet.
- 2 **Learn the repeat-back.** Whenever someone gives you a name or number, say it back: "So that's 0-7-7-0-0, 9-0-0-1-2-3?" British speakers usually say "double" for repeated digits: "double seven".
- 3 **Practise asking.** Say each of these aloud until it feels ordinary.

WHEN YOU DIDN'T CATCH IT	REGISTER
Sorry, the line's not great. Could you say that again?	neutral
Could you spell that for me, please?	neutral
Was that M for Mike or N for November?	neutral
Could you slow down a little? I'm just writing it down.	neutral
Would you mind putting that in an email as well?	polite

Notice that "the line's not great" and "I'm just writing it down" are true on most calls, and give everyone a reason to slow down without anyone mentioning English.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

14

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 14

PHONE AND VIDEO CALLS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 4 · MAKE THE TECHNOLOGY WORK FOR YOU

TRY THIS

Before your next video call

YOUR VIDEO-CALL SET-UP

BEFORE THE CALL	✓
I've found the live captions setting and switched it on	
I've hidden my self-view (most platforms let you)	
I know where "raise hand" and the chat box are	
I have my call card (Point 2) beside the screen	
I'm using headphones, which make voices much clearer	
I've done two physiological sighs with my microphone muted	

Useful when people talk over each other: "Sorry, go ahead." · "I think there's a bit of a delay. You first." · "Can I just come in here?"

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

14

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 14

PHONE AND VIDEO CALLS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 5 · FROM VOICEMAIL TO CONFERENCE CALL

TRY THIS

Over the next month

YOUR CALL LADDER, AND A FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

RUNG	MY CALL	ANXIETY	DONE ✓
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

A follow-up template to adapt:

"Hi Dave, thanks for your time on the phone just now. Just to confirm what we agreed: [point one]; [point two]. Let me know if I've missed anything. Many thanks, Oksana."

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 15

SMALL TALK, HUMOUR AND BRITISH CULTURE

Date _____

POINT 1 · SMALL TALK IS ABOUT CONNECTION, NOT INFORMATION

5 minutes a day

PING-PONG PRACTICE

For each opener, prepare a short answer and a question to send back. Say them aloud until they're easy.

THEY SAY	SHORT ANSWER	BACK TO THEM
Good weekend?	Yeah, nice and quiet, thanks.	Did you get up to much?
Busy today?	Not too bad. Bit of a Monday.	How about you?
Horrible out, isn't it?	I know! Got soaked this morning.	Have you got far to go later?
Any plans for the summer?		
How's the new flat?		
My own opener:		

Safe topics: the weather, the weekend, travel, food, local news, the commute, holidays. **Usually avoided with people you don't know well:** salary, religion, politics, age and weight.

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 15

SMALL TALK, HUMOUR AND BRITISH CULTURE

Date _____

TRY THIS

Ongoing

Each time a phrase puzzles you, add it to your decoder. When it really matters, ask politely. Checking is far better than guessing wrong.

WHAT THEY SAID	WHAT I THINK IT MEANT	CHECKED? ✓

Polite ways to check: "Just so I'm clear, would you like me to change it?" · "Is that a yes for now, or shall I come back to you?" · "Sorry, I'm still getting used to how things are said here: was that a good 'not bad'?" (This last one usually gets a laugh, and a straight answer.)

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 15

SMALL TALK, HUMOUR AND BRITISH CULTURE

Date _____

TRY THIS

This week

TWO LINES AND A LAUGH

Choose your favourite "say so, lightly" line from Figure 15.3 and your own "laugh at a slip" line. Practise them aloud until they're automatic, then use each once this week.

My line for a joke I don't get:

My line for laughing at my own slip (e.g. "Ha, that came out wrong. Let me try again."):

What happened when I used them:

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 15

SMALL TALK, HUMOUR AND BRITISH CULTURE

Date _____

POINT 4 · A HANDFUL OF IDIOMS GOES A LONG WAY

Two weeks

Choose three idioms. For two weeks, listen for them: on the radio, at work, on TV. Tick each time you hear one. When one feels familiar, use it yourself, once, in a low-stakes conversation.

IDIOM	TIMES I HEARD IT	I USED IT ✓

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 15

SMALL TALK, HUMOUR AND BRITISH CULTURE

Date _____

TRY THIS

At your next social event

Set yourself a small, specific goal for your next event, meeting or break: join one conversation, ask one question, and leave politely. That's all. You can do more if it's going well, but you don't have to.

Where and when:

My joining line, my question, my exit line:

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

16

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 16 WHEN YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND THEM

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 1 · WHEN YOU SPEAK, YOU'RE IN CONTROL. WHEN YOU LISTEN, YOU'RE NOT.

TRY THIS

5 minutes

YOUR LISTENING TRIGGERS

Rate how anxious each situation makes you. Add your own. You'll use this list to build a listening ladder in Point 5.

SITUATION	ANXIETY 1-10
A one-to-one conversation with someone I know	
A phone call with a stranger	
A meeting where several people talk	
A group in a noisy pub, café or party	
An unfamiliar regional accent	
Films or TV without subtitles	
Announcements at a station or airport	
My own:	

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 16

WHEN YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND THEM

Name

Date _____

POINT 2 · YOU DON'T NEED EVERY WORD

TRY THIS

10 minutes, three times this week

PREDICT, THEN LISTEN FOR KEYWORDS

- 1 Before you listen** to a short news item, podcast or video, read the title and write three things you expect to hear.
- 2 While you listen**, write down only the key words: names, numbers, nouns, main verbs. Don't stop for anything you miss.
- 3 Afterwards**, write one sentence summarising the main point. Then check with a transcript or subtitles, if there is one.

I PREDICTED	KEY WORDS I CAUGHT	THE MAIN POINT

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 16

WHEN YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND THEM

Name

Date _____

POINT 3 · NEW ACCENTS GET EASIER, OFTEN SURPRISINGLY FAST

10 minutes a day for a week

Choose the accent you find hardest, ideally one you need to understand. For one week, listen to ten minutes a day of speakers with that accent: local radio, a podcast, a TV programme set in that region, interviews with a local footballer. Use subtitles at first if they help. Rate your understanding at the start and end of the week.

ACCENT	WHAT I LISTENED TO	DAY 1 %	DAY 7 %

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 16

WHEN YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND THEM

Name

Date _____

POINT 4 · SURVIVING THE GROUP CHAT IN A NOISY ROOM

TRY THIS

Next group situation

YOUR GROUP SURVIVAL PHRASES

Choose two to use next time you're in a group and lose the thread. Notice how easily people help.

WHEN YOU'VE LOST THE THREAD	REGISTER
Sorry, I missed the start. What are we talking about?	neutral
Who's that? Sorry, I don't know them.	neutral
Sorry, it's so loud in here. Say that again?	neutral
Hang on, I've lost track. Who did what?	informal
Ha, I've never seen it. What's it about?	informal

Notice "it's so loud in here". In a noisy room, it's true for everyone, and it lets you ask without making it about your English.

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

16

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 16 WHEN YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND THEM

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 5 · BUILD YOUR EAR ONE RUNG AT A TIME

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

Over the next month

YOUR LISTENING LADDER

RUNG	WHAT I'LL LISTEN TO	WHERE TO FIND IT	✓
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Good places to start: BBC Learning English (learner programmes with transcripts), BBC Sounds for radio and podcasts across the UK, the British Business English podcast for workplace English, and any podcast about a topic you already love.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

SPEAKING TESTS AND INTERVIEWS

Name

Date _____

POINT 1 · WHY BEING ASSESSED CHANGES EVERYTHING

10 minutes

WORST, LIKELY, AND PLAN B

The worst I imagine	
What's most likely to happen based on my practice scores and experience	
If it doesn't go well, my plan B retake date, other routes, who could help	
How I'd cope	

Having a plan B doesn't mean expecting to fail. It means your alarm no longer has to treat the test as the only chance you'll ever get.

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

SPEAKING TESTS AND INTERVIEWS

Name

Date _____

POINT 2 · ACCURACY IS ONLY ONE PART OF THE SCORE

15 minutes

Record yourself answering one practice question for two minutes. Then listen, and give yourself a mark out of five for each of the four areas, writing one strength for each. Notice how much of your answer has nothing to do with mistakes.

AREA	/5	ONE STRENGTH I CAN HEAR
Fluency and coherence		
Vocabulary		
Grammar: range and accuracy		
Pronunciation		

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

17

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 17

SPEAKING TESTS AND INTERVIEWS

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 3 · MAKE THE REAL THING FEEL FAMILIAR

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

Twice a week until the test

THE TIMED MOCK

Write ten realistic questions on cards (official sample questions are usually free online). Shuffle them. Draw one, start a timer, and answer aloud: about a minute for a short question, two for a longer topic. Record it. Then mark it as in Point 2.

Question ideas: Describe a place you'd like to visit again · Talk about a skill you learned as an adult · Is technology making people less sociable? · Describe a time you helped someone · Should cities ban cars from the centre?

DATE	QUESTION	NERVES 1-10	WHAT WENT WELL

Watch the "nerves" column over the weeks. If it's coming down, the practice is working, even before the scores move.

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

SPEAKING TESTS AND INTERVIEWS

Date _____

TRY THIS

TEST-SAFE PHRASES

TO BUY THINKING TIME

REGISTER

That's an interesting question. I haven't really thought about it before, but...

neutral

Let me think... I suppose the main thing is...

neutral

IF YOU DIDN'T UNDERSTAND

Sorry, could you repeat the question, please?

neutral

Do you mean... or...?

neutral

IF YOU LOSE A WORD

It's a kind of... you use it for... · I can't think of the word, but it's like...

neutral

IF YOU LOSE YOUR THREAD

Sorry, let me start that again. · Where was I? Yes, so...

neutral

SPEAK ENGLISH WITHOUT THE ANXIETY · WORKSHEETS · [ATTENGLISH.COM/ANXIETY-TOOL/WORKSHEETS](https://attenglish.com/anxiety-tool/worksheets)

SPEAKING TESTS AND INTERVIEWS

Date

10 minutes

Days 7–5	
Days 4–2	
Day 1	
Test morning	
Waiting room	

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

HELPING SOMEONE ELSE SPEAK

Date _____

5 minutes

18

PART FOUR · GOING FURTHER · CHAPTER 18

HELPING SOMEONE ELSE SPEAK

Name _____

Date _____

POINT 2 · SMALL CHANGES, BIG DIFFERENCE

CORE ACTIVITY

TRY THIS

For your next meeting, class or group

THE SAFER-MEETING CHECKLIST

BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER	✓
Send the agenda, and any key questions, the day before	
Invite contributions in more than one way: speaking, chat, or a follow-up email	
After asking a question, wait at least five seconds before filling the silence	
Use a round, so everyone has a turn without having to fight for it	
Notice and stop cross-talk: "Let's hear Wei first, then Sam"	
Avoid in-jokes and idioms, or explain them briefly	
Respond to the idea, not the English	
Send a short written summary of decisions and actions	

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

HELPING SOMEONE ELSE SPEAK

Date _____

5 minutes

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

HELPING SOMEONE ELSE SPEAK

Date _____

POINT 4 · FOR NATIVE SPEAKERS: SAY IT SO IT LANDS

5 minutes

SAY IT PLAINLY

Rewrite each sentence in plain English that a learner would understand first time.

IDIOMATIC	PLAIN
Let's touch base next week and see where we're at.	
The ball's in their court now.	
Can you run it past Steve before it goes out?	
We're going to have to push back on that.	

NOTES • WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

HELPING SOMEONE ELSE SPEAK

Name

Date _____

POINT 5 · YOU'RE THE PERSON YOU NEEDED

This month

Choose one person and one action from Figure 18.5. If it seems right, you could also tell them about the free lessons that go with this book, at attenglisch.com/anxiety-tool.

The person:

The action, and when:

What happened:

NOTES · WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I TRIED IT

MORE FROM ATT ENGLISH ACADEMY

The twelve free interactive lessons that go with Chapters 1 to 12 are at attenglish.com/anxiety-tool. Each one takes about fifteen minutes.

For private lessons, small weekly groups, pronunciation practice and the rest of the ATT books, visit attenglish.com.

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