



Improve your English in 10 minutes a day

The concept

While there is no quick fix for English language issues, persistent practice in bite-sized activities every day can make a big difference in the long run.

Even if you can only devote 10 minutes a day to practicing a skill purposefully, it can not only help you achieve noticeable improvements over a period of time, but it can also immediately increase your enjoyment of English.

Your 10-minute English practice should be:

- **Comprehensible**
You understand most of the material.
- **Interesting**
You enjoy discovering new ideas about the material topic; it could be one of your hobbies, for example.
- **Daily**
You spend 10 minutes a day, every day, focusing on a language skill.

Combining both the understanding and use of a language skill or item is one effective way to structure your 10 minutes.

To do this, you can spend five minutes on a receptive skill, i.e. listening or reading, then five minutes on a productive skill, i.e. speaking or writing.

The trick is to be strict about the listening/reading time - it's easy to get carried away and end up not being able to practise using what you've learned. Another option is to practise receptive and productive skills on alternate days.

Resources

These are some great **listening/speaking resources** for your daily practice:

- ted.com
- abc.net.au
- BBC Radio 4 in four
- theweek.com/audio
- [Academic Skills, the University of Melbourne on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uj8111111111)

For **pronunciation practice**, visit these sources:

- [Clickable phonemic chart: BBC English](http://www.bbc.com/learningenglish/american/phonetics)
- [shiporsheep.com](http://www.shiporsheep.com)
- [Academic Skills' 'Speaking clearly' YouTube series](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uj8111111111)

For **reading resources**, you can try:

- bbc.com/news
- aljazeera.com
- edition.cnn.com
- nytimes.com
- huffingtonpost.com
- abc.net.au
- theguardian.com
- theconversation.com/au
- scmp.com
- medium.com
- smithsonianmag.com
- ideas.ted.com

Pictures on news websites can also be used as **writing prompts**, for example:

- abc.net.au/news/photos/
- bbc.com/news/in_pictures

Set a goal

Besides having comprehensible and interesting material for your daily practice, you also need to set a clear goal for each 10-minute session. This can be any language skill or item you want to focus on.

Here are some examples of goals:

- Learn three new words and use them
- Learn and practise a grammar point (e.g. the use of 'a/an' or 'the', the use of an English tense or subject-verb agreement in a sentence)
- Understand the main idea in your reading or listening, and summarise it verbally or in writing
- Learn and practise ways to give your opinion on another's idea, verbally or in writing
- 'Free-write' about the information (without stopping to edit your writing as you go)

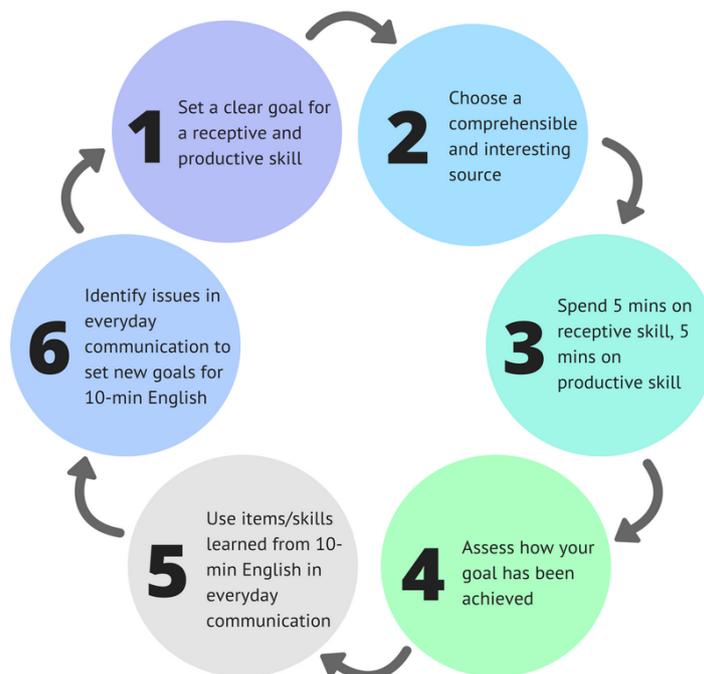
- Talk about the information focusing on fluency (just keep talking with minimal pause)
- Understand and practise an English sound
- Practise putting sentence stress on important information
- Notice and practise ways to start a conversation
- Learn and practise using idioms that you hear or read
- Immerse yourself in English – enjoy and observe interesting expressions

You can quickly jot down a specific goal every day, or make a list of all the goals you want to achieve in a week or a month.

Whatever you do, be flexible about the goals as they can change according to emergent language needs.

The process

The diagram below outlines a six-step cycle to make the most out of your 10-minute practice.



The idea of 10-minute English is simple enough. The real challenge is to maintain the habit in your daily routine.

You can use any short bursts of time you can find in your weekly schedule.

You may find that a visual reminder of your 10-minute English goals and resources for each week put up at your work station can have a lot of motivational value.

Enjoy your 10-minute play with English every day!