



034 ENG Tutorial

Today I'd like to dedicate a little time to giving you some advice on how to best take advantage of our videos. There are many possible strategies, and the ones you use depend on your own individual learning style. The most obvious tactic in learning here is the repetition and reviewing of the material. In just one single video there is a wealth of information: idiomatic expressions, phrasal verbs, vocabulary, grammatical structures, and so on. After becoming very familiar with one of the videos, for example, you could change some of the verbs, vocabulary, and tenses in the text to create your own new story, thereby actively using what you've learned to fit your own needs. This demonstrates real learning, and not just memorization. Learning a language is not "linear" in nature. When young children learn to speak their mother tongue, they don't study grammar. They learn through a variety of experiences using a combination of senses. This is one reason why we dance and sing when we teach children. The same holds true for adults, who are just very big children after all! The more sensory experiences you have when learning, the greater the chances are that you'll retain what you've learned, and the greater ability you'll have to put that knowledge to practical use. These videos are not a panacea, but they are an important step. Other helpful advice is to watch small pieces of a film, or a TV show on DVD, or another format that allows you to switch subtitles on and off. Changing the audio back and forth between English and your own native language is also helpful. I'd like to mention here that on the website (www.engpods.com) and the YouTube channel (EngPodsTV), you can switch the subtitles on and off by clicking on "CC" in the lower right-hand corner of the video. This allows you to watch a video first in English (or your native language), and then to watch it in the other language to see how much you've understood. Try watching a video 2 or 3 times before consulting the text. In my experience with students, I've found that on the first listening they often feel discouraged. I always ask them to rate their comprehension with a self-score (A scale of 1-10, or a percentage). Invariably, the first time they have a low score. On the second listening they almost always have a higher score, and by the third listening they understand even more. Then, after reviewing the texts, when they go back to the video, they usually understand almost 100%. All of this takes just a few minutes. And if they review what they've learned during the following week, it becomes part of their long-term memory. They have LEARNED! Another strategy is to first become familiar with the text before watching. This way you'll be prepared for what you hear. An additional useful hint is to just listen to the audio without watching the video. You can download the mp3 audio file tracks from our website engpods.com. Just click on "Video List" on the main menu. Then click on the "mp3" link on any one of the videos. You may also want to try watching the video with the sound off and try to read my lips as I speak. Try to remember the words I use. Go back and forth. If you have friends who are also interested in improving their English, make a game of it. Test each other on vocabulary and expressions. This is a great reinforcer. Passive listening is also helpful. For example, listen to a video when you're washing the dishes or having lunch. The brain will automatically "absorb" the information on a deeper cognitive level. HAVE FUN! Play with English. Some people have told me that I speak too quickly in the videos, and others feel that I speak too slowly. I'd like to remind you that one of the main objectives of these videos is to introduce typical idiomatic expressions. Once you've become familiar with these expressions, you'll know what they mean when you encounter them in real life situations such as when you see a film, travel, read, etc. Even

doing just one video a week (but learning it very well) will bear much fruit (quality is better than quantity). And finally, I want to encourage you to appreciate each small step forward that you make. Don't underestimate this. Many small steps add up to progress over time. Stick to it! When you learn English, or any other language, it is an admirable thing. It's good for the world. It helps us to understand others and helps us to see ourselves. Learning a foreign language can help to bring peace to this beautiful planet that we live on.

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