



## Speaking in English

Speaking in another language can be exhausting at times, but it will get easier if you practise and persist with it.

Let's look at 5 strategies for working on your speaking skills.

### 1. Stay positive

You might feel like you're on an emotional roller coaster, but try to relax and have fun by being creative and experimenting with language.

### 2. Record yourself

Record yourself speaking as you prepare for a presentation, talk through a problem or practise a conversation. When you listen to the recording, take notes of what went well and what you would like to improve.

Keep an archive of your speaking. Over time, you will hear yourself improve. This will be particularly useful in improving your confidence, as you might not otherwise notice your own progress, particularly in speaking.

### 3. Speak socially

Look for opportunities to speak English outside your classes. This is particularly important if you speak your first language at home. You might even find it helpful to start a hobby you are not familiar with in your first language, so that you are not tempted to translate back and forth between languages.

### 4. Plan ahead

Planning ahead is important. This will be easier when you are giving a presentation: you can write a script for yourself and use slides to support you.

Don't try to memorise the text word for word, though, as it may lead to unnecessary stress if you accidentally get one word wrong.

Even if you are not giving a presentation, you can still plan ahead to maximise your confidence when speaking in class.

Knowing how to start a sentence will buy you some time to find the right words.

- Write stock phrases or templates you can use and adapt at short notice.
- Practise saying your model sentences out loud before class.

#### Examples of possible phrases to use in different contexts

- To agree:
  - *I agree with what [X] said about...*
  - *I like this idea because...*
- To disagree:
  - *The writer says [X], but in my experience...*
  - *That's an interesting point, but another option is...*
- To elaborate:
  - *This is because...*
  - *The evidence suggests...*
- To illustrate:
  - *For example, when I first...*
  - *One situation where this is very important is...*
- To summarise:
  - *So, I'm excited about this because...*
  - *Still, despite these problems, I think...*
- To connect ideas:
  - *This reminds me of the point [X] made earlier...*
  - *We've said [XYZ], but we haven't yet discussed...*

## **5. Get started**

Language is like music: you have to practise as you would practise any instrument, and you can only practise by doing.

Don't overthink it, and don't be afraid to make mistakes. No one speaks in grammatically pure sentences, even (or especially!) in their first language, so don't let that hold you back. Your confidence will increase if you adopt practical strategies for improving your skills, and just have a go.