

WORD UP!



EAE Learning objectives for this lesson



Learn and practice to improve your comprehension. Learn new linking words and expressions to structure what you are saying. Learn more about the English language and how it evolves constantly. Learn how to use rising and falling 'pitch'.



Activity One: Answer the following questions.

1. Do you often watch TV in English, for example on Netflix?
2. Do you understand well?
3. Do you use subtitles?
4. Do you have the subtitles in French or English?
5. Do you look up, or write down new words and expressions?
6. Do you find certain shows hard to understand?
7. Which types of dialogue do you find harder to understand?
8. What's your strategy for trying to understand?

Activity Two: Read the advice.

Using Netflix, YouTube, or watching TV in English is a great way to practise and can be fun, too! Choose the right TV series/film to watch. If you are a beginner or intermediate learner, you should choose something short to watch - it can be hard to concentrate for a very long time. Lots of sitcoms and animated shows have episodes that are 20 minutes long, these are great for beginners! If you are more advanced, you can aim for series with longer run-times, or full-length films. Most importantly, though, choose something you like! You will find it easier to concentrate if you are interested in the show/film that you're watching!

It's okay to use subtitles! If you can only hear the voices speaking English this will help you to improve your listening skills. That said, here is a technique for maximising your learning using subtitles: watch it twice! The first time you watch, put the subtitles on and make sure you understand the scene. Then, go back and watch the scene again, this time with no subtitles! This will help you to hear and recognise the words the characters are saying. When you're watching films and TV in English, you are very unlikely to understand 100% of the dialogue -that's normal!! There are hundreds of different accents and dialects of English, and often even native speakers don't understand everything if the characters have a strong accent! You should focus on understanding the general meaning of any scene, listen for key words and don't be disappointed if you don't understand absolutely everything!

You may find new words and expressions which you have never heard before. Language is constantly evolving and the English language is spoken in different ways across the globe. Even within individual countries there are many different varieties of English, including local dialects and local accents and expressions. For example, in an Australian movie or TV series you will hear different expressions from those you could hear in a Scottish TV drama. If you come across an expressions which is very specific to a local dialect, it may not be very useful for you to learn it. You need to adopt a practical strategy for listening, using your intuition and the context to understand the general meaning. If you get into the habit of looking up words when you come across new ones, or new expressions, then try to find out if they are mainstream or if they are only understood in a specific local area. This dictionary can be useful for that The Urban Dictionary -<https://www.urbandictionary.com>

Word Up - the expression is an emphatic way of saying yes, it's also a way of saying 'I understand', The expression originated in United States, black English (i.e. African American Vernacular English) of the 1980s.

Activity Three: Listen to the song:



Read the lyrics.

There are some classic lines in this song - Which do you like the best?

*Yoh pretty ladies around the world
 Got a weird thing to show you,
 So tell all the boys and girls.
 Tell your brother, your sister
 And mama too, cause they're
 About to go down
 And you'll know just what to do.
 Wave your hands in the air
 Like you don't care, glide by
 The People as they start to look and stare.
 Do you dance, do your dance quick
 Mama, come on baby, tell me what's
 The Word, ah - word up,
 Everybody say when you hear the call
 You got to get it underway,
 Word up, it's the code word,
 No matter where you say it,
 You'll know that you'll be heard.*

Questions:

1. Describe the singers' outfit.
2. Describe some of the dance moves.
3. What do you have to realise?
4. What don't you have the time for?
5. What do you have to do when you hear the call?



*Now all you sucker. D.J.'s
 Who think you're fly
 There's got to be a reason
 And we know the reason why.
 And act real cool
 But you got to realise
 That you're acting like fools.
 If there's music we can use it
 We need to dance.
 We don't have that time
 For psychological romance
 No romance
 No romance
 No romance for me mama
 Come on baby tell me what's the word.
 Ah, word up,
 Everybody say when you hear the call
 You got to get it underway.
 Low
 Dial "L" for low
 Come on, all you people say...
 W-O-R-D UP
 W-O-R-D UP
 W-O-R-D UP
 W-O-R-D UP
 W-O-R-D UP
 W-O-R-D up (hey)
 Hey--(hey you)hey, hey-(what)
 (Hey-ey-ey--Hey--whew)
 La, la, la, la, la, la, low (low)
 (Whew-- whoo whoo, woah)
 Say it like that, (like that),
 Say it like that, ya'll know it (woah).
 What's the word? (What's (Woah!) the
 word?)
 Everybody's got to know-ow.(woah yeah)
 Everybody say it, woah!
 Low,
 They think real low.(Oww!)
 As low as you go (whew)
 Ahhhh, low, low, low, Low
 As low as you go, man...*



Activity Four: Linking words.

It all makes sense!

When you want to make your meaning clear it's important to structure what you are saying. Here are some really useful, but not often used linking words which can really help you clarify and stress the important things you want to say! Which of these are new to you? Which do you want to try and learn? Try writing them on a post it on your desk for a week and see if you can use them.

- likewise
- by the same token
- then again
- after all
- given that
- with this in mind
- in other words
- to put it another way
- all in all
- overall



- chiefly
- in particular
- it must be remembered that
- on the positive side
- on the negative side
- consequently
- on balance
- ultimately
- for the most part



Activity Five: Using the linking words from above answer the following questions:

1. Do you find that you learn more from watching TV in English with or without subtitles.
2. Do you think it's important to learn words and expressions which are really used today in the cities, streets, towns and villages of English speaking countries?
3. What is your favourite English language TV show or movie and why?
4. What do you think of the quality of TV shows and movies on streaming?
5. Do you think that the quality of entertainment is improving?

Activity Six: Word UP! - Using Rising and Falling pitch in English!



Word UP! - Using Rising and Falling pitch in English!

Listen to somebody who is speaking, but don't pay attention to the words: that 'melody' that you hear is what we call the intonation. It has these features:

- It's separated into phrases, which are also called 'tone-units'.
- The pitch moves up and down, inside a 'pitch range'. Every person on earth has their own pitch range. Languages also differ in pitch range. The English language has got a particularly wide pitch range.

- In each tone unit, the pitch movement (a fall or a rise in the tone, or a mixture of the two) takes place on the most pronounced and important syllable which is known as the 'tonic-syllable'. The tonic-syllable is normally a high-content word, which occurs near the end of the unit.
- The patterns of pitch variation are important for a phrase's meaning. They are so important that changing the intonation can completely change the meaning.
- For example:
 - Say: 'It's raining'.
 - Now say it again using the same words, but giving it different meaning. You could say it to mean 'What a surprise!', or 'How annoying!', or 'That's great!'. There are many possibilities.

Activity Seven: - Word stress

Word stress is the emphasis that is placed on one **syllable** of a **word** when speaking. This happens in every English language word that has more than one **syllable**.

Listen to your teacher say the word 'computer'. This word has three syllables - COM-PU-TER.

The second syllable of the word is stressed- the sound is *slightly* longer, louder, OR more emphasised than the first and last syllable.

There are some rules for this, but many exceptions too- so you will have to learn many by heart through watching TV and speaking to native speakers when possible! But let's go over some rules and examples for stress.

Rule 1: One word has only one stress.

Rule 2: We can not stress consonants, only vowels. (com-pU-ter)

Rule 3: we put stress on the first syllable for:

Most 2-syllable nouns (PREsent, CONduct, CHIna, CHAIr)

Most 2-syllable adjectives (PREsent, TIred, CLEVer)

Rule 4: we put stress on the last syllable for:

Most 2-syllable verbs (to preSENT, to conDUCT, to enHANCE, to conFORM)

Now it's your turn... where is the stress?

Bottle

To transform

Happy

To suspend

Afraid

Window



Activity Eight: Read the text and try to use rising and falling pitch where appropriate: ([Source: https://daily.jstor.org/black-english-matters/](https://daily.jstor.org/black-english-matters/)).

Black English Matters

People who criticise African American Vernacular English don't see that it shares grammatical structures with more "prestigious" languages.

A double negative means using more than one negative in the same sentence. Grammar pedants and prescriptivists don't approve of this. They think « I'm not saying nothing » must be logically equivalent to « I am saying something », because the negatives cancel each other out, but it is common in AAVE (African American Vernacular English) as a way to emphasise negation. It is a false belief in mainstream American media that people who use double negatives like this must be uneducated or unintelligent .

In fact, before the 18th century, everyone used to use double negatives in this way, including famous writers like Shakespeare and Chaucer. However, now it is seen as ungrammatical and socially unacceptable.

Why does this matter ? Well, if people think someone speaks with « bad grammar », that can have negative effects on their lives. This can be a problem for people who speak dialects that aren't standard or mainstream. Getting job interviews, renting an apartment, and interacting with the police can all be much harder if you speak in a particular accent or dialect.

Speakers of AAVE or « Black English » which is used by many African American communities, may be stigmatised because they use features like double negatives, or the 'habitual be' (« he be walking » = he walks (habitually))

Actually, many grammatical structures in AAVE can be found in other languages. Ancient Greek used double negatives, and French « ne + pas » requires two negative elements. But these are not considered illogical or ungrammatical, which shows us that the stigma is subjective and political.

Linguists have tried to show that the grammar of Black English is not poorer than Standard American English, but the myth still exists that it is an inferior version of the language and its speakers are uneducated.

There are in fact many different types of Black English, which can tell deep linguistic histories of migration and movement. Moreover, Black English has affected popular culture in many ways : it's used in poetry, storytelling, music and social media. It has also changed Standard American English, for example, words like « dissing » (insulting) and « grifter » (scammer) have appeared in newspapers like the New York Times, and words like "brother," "cool," and "high five" originally came from AAVE.

It's a shame that Black English is still devalued, when it contributes so much, and really it should be celebrated.

Comprehension questions:

1. What is a double negative?
2. According to this article, what is the mainstream belief about people that use double negatives?
3. What was different before the 18th Century?
4. Name two other languages that also use two negative elements.
5. In what ways has Black English affected popular culture?
6. What is meant by stigma?
7. Did anything about this article surprise you? Why?

Activity Nine: Using the following expressions give your opinion on the following question:

- *I feel that*
- *It seems to me that*
- *It's true to say that*
- *However*
- *All in all*

What is 'proper English', should it exist or should all types of English be considered equal and equally adequate?

Activity Nine: Read the following words, can you get the word stress right?

- Unintelligibility
- Celebrity
- Analysis
- Analyse
- Instrument
- Instrumental
- Understandable
- Alternative
- Figurative
- Photographer
- Photograph



How far have you got?

learning objectives

