EPISODE 056

Extensive vs. Intensive Reading

Full transcript · point of view · vocabulary review

Hello, everybody! I am Georgiana, your online English teacher, founder of SpeakEnglishPodcast.com. My mission is to help you to speak English fluently. Speaking English is easier than it seems! You just have to use the right material and techniques.

I hope you're doing great; I'm back from the summer holidays with plenty of energy and with a brand new episode.

In this episode:

I'll teach you to express the frequency in English.

And with a point of view story, you'll practice the vocabulary that I mention in the first section.

Lastly, I'll talk about an exciting topic: **intensive reading** vs. **extensive reading** on how to build vocabulary and consolidate what you already know.

By the way, thank you for listening to this podcast. I'm more than happy to create content that will help you improve your English.

Alright! Let's get started!

When you want to know how **often** something occurs, you ask questions like: "How often?" or "How frequently?"

If you want to show exactly how frequently something occurs, you use words like daily, weekly, once or twice, three times, etc.

Example:

How often do you go to the gym?

"I go to the gym daily, weekly, it all depends on my mood."

Here are some similar words that you can use to tell people how often something happens:

Hourly, monthly, yearly, every second, once a minute, twice a year, once, twice, etc

On the other hand, when we can't guarantee how often something happens, we use words like often or **rarely**. These words still give us an idea of the frequency, but not accurately.

Example:

How frequently do you go shopping?

"I go shopping often, and sometimes I buy clothes, but I rarely buy any jewelry."

Let's look at some similar words that express frequency without being too precise, and I'll go from words with 100% frequency to words with 0% frequency.

I know what you must be thinking right now! I gotta memorize all these words. Well, let me tell you that in this episode, I'm just trying to help you become familiar with how to express frequency. You don't need to memorize anything. Just listen and relax! :)

Now we'll practice some of these words with the point of view story.

Point of View

Grammar in Context

First version

Past Tense

Gollum was a bizarre person. He never went to parties, and whenever he could, he was alone. He rarely saw his few friends and only **occasionally** bought food for several weeks. He ate alone, **usually** in silence. In his pocket, he had an object wrapped in a rag. He often took it out just to look at it and cleaned it frequently. Sometimes he would caress the object, which was a strange ring, and said, "My precious!"

Second version

Present Tense

Gollum is a bizarre person. He never goes to parties, and whenever he can, he's alone. He rarely sees his few friends and only occasionally buys food for several weeks. He eats alone, usually in silence. In his pocket, he's got an object wrapped in a rag. He often takes it out just to look at it and cleans it frequently. Sometimes he caresses the object, which is a strange ring, saying, "My precious!"

Third version

Future Tense

Gollum will be a bizarre person. He'll never go to parties, and whenever he can, he'll be alone. He'll rarely see his few friends and will only occasionally buy food for several weeks. He'll eat alone, usually in silence. In his pocket, he'll have an object wrapped in a rag. Often, he'll take it out just to look at it and clean it frequently. Sometimes, he'll caress the object, which will be a strange ring, and say: "My precious!"

Fourth version

Conditional

If Gollum existed, he'd be a bizarre person. He'd never go to parties, and whenever he could, he'd be alone. He would rarely see his few friends and would only occasionally buy food for the several weeks. He'd eat alone, usually in silence. In his pocket, he'd have an object wrapped in a rag. He'd often take it out just to look at it and clean it frequently. Sometimes, he'd caress the object, which would be a strange ring, and say: "My precious!"

Version 5

FIFTH VERSION Second Person · Present

Gollum, my friend, you're a bizarre person. You never go to parties, and whenever you can, you're alone. You rarely see your few friends, and you only occasionally buy food for the several weeks. You eat alone, usually in silence. In your pocket, you have an object wrapped in a rag. Often you take it out just to look at it, and you clean it frequently. Sometimes, you caress the object, which is a strange ring, and say: "My precious!" You're definitely weird, Gollum. By the way, will you let me touch that ring? Just for a while.

Perfect, so let's move on to the last section :)

INTENSIVE VS. EXTENSIVE READING

Today I'll talk about **extensive reading** in contrast to **intensive reading**.

First of all, a reflection: When we are kids, in our native language, we know between 5000 and 10000 words. As the years go by, and we become adults, we can easily reach 20,000 words. Well, the fundamental question is, how did we accumulate so many different words in our own language. What we know for sure is that we didn't spend years creating vocabulary lists and trying to memorize them.

What really happens is that over the years, we see so many new words in different contexts that we end up learning their meaning. And this happens with thousands of words.

I don't mean that it's not necessary to consult the dictionary, but it's important to understand that we can learn a lot from the **context**.

When learning a new language, intensive reading has these characteristics:

It's usually difficult for your level.

You use the dictionary for words you don't know.

Use of short and disconnected texts.

This learning approach has its advantages, especially when your level is low. Then you can learn a lot. The problem is that it's not effective when you start learning a lot of words because it's easy to forget the meanings.

In opposition, we have an extensive reading:

It's usually easy. The text is used where the vast majority of words are known.

Long texts are used to provide a great context.

You usually don't use the dictionary because you get the meaning of words you don't know from the context.

It's also much less tiring than **intensive reading**.

As you can see, **extensive** reading is entirely different from intensive reading. This is the technique we have used with our mother tongue since we were kids. When we read books, we used a level appropriate to our age. So there were relatively few new words.

My recommendation is that you give the extensive reading a chance when you reach a lower-intermediate level or higher. Choose long texts such as children's novels and read them. This practice will help you consolidate what you already know and incorporate vocabulary little by little, all at the same time.

Thanks for listening, and I'll see you in the next episode.

Review

Vocabulary from This Episode

Review the most useful words and expressions before listening again.

01 How often?
A question used to ask about the frequency of an action or event.

02 Daily
Happening every day.

03 Weekly
Happening every week.

04 Monthly
Happening every month.

05 Yearly
Happening every year.

06 Often
Happening many times or frequently.

07 Rarely
Happening only occasionally or not very often.

08 Frequency
How often something happens.

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