EPISODE 007

Stopped Improving Your English? When Progress Feels Slow

Full transcript · point of view · vocabulary review

Hi, everybody! I'm Georgiana, founder of SpeakEnglishPodcast.com.

Welcome to a new episode of the Speak English Now podcast.

Today, I want to talk about something frustrating.

You study. You listen. You practice.

At first, you see progress.

Then, after some time, it feels like you are not getting better.

Maybe this has happened to you.

There's a word for this: **plateau**.

It means your progress seems to stop.

A simpler way to say it is: you feel stuck.

The same word also describes a large, flat area of land.

Imagine walking up a mountain.

You go higher and higher.

Then you reach a flat area.

You're still walking, but you're not going up.

Learning English can feel like that.

In the beginning, progress is often easy to see.

Later, progress becomes more **gradual**.

The changes are smaller.

Sometimes they are not **noticeable**.

That's when you may start to worry.

You may **lose motivation**.

You may feel **discouraged**.

And maybe you start changing everything.

A new app.

A new teacher.

A new course.

A new method.

But sometimes, nothing is wrong.

Your English is still growing.

The change is just hard to see from day to day.

Think about someone you see every day.

If their hair gets a little longer, you may not notice.

But if you don't see them for three months, you notice right away.

English can be like that.

If you want to check your progress, go back to something from a few months ago.

Try an old podcast episode or lesson.

Listen again.

You may understand more words.

The speaker may seem slower.

You may not need the transcript as much.

That is progress.

Regular practice matters.

Keep listening to English you can understand.

This gives you more **exposure**.

Your brain also gets time to **adapt**.

Repeat useful material.

Repetition helps **reinforce** what you know.

Then, one day, you may have a **breakthrough**.

Something that felt hard may suddenly feel easier.

Should you do more?

Maybe a little.

If your material is too hard, choose something easier.

If you're bored, choose a topic you enjoy.

Maybe you usually listen for thirty minutes a day.

For a week or two, you could listen for forty-five minutes.

But you don't need to force yourself to study for three hours.

The goal is to **maintain** a routine that works for you.

And don't **overlook** small progress.

Understanding one more sentence without translating is progress.

Answering a little faster is progress.

Hearing an expression and understanding it right away is progress.

So if you feel stuck, **stick with it**.

Keep going.

Progress may feel slow, but it can still be happening.

Okay. Let's practice with a Point of View lesson.

You'll hear the same story three times.

First, you'll hear it in the past.

Then you'll hear it in the present.

Finally, you'll hear it in the future.

Don't study the grammar.

Just listen and notice how the language changes.

Let's start!

Point of View

Grammar in Context

01

FIRST VERSION

Past Tense

Last year, Emma started learning English.

She listened every day.

At first, she improved fast.

After a few months, she understood more English.

She also answered simple questions faster.

Then her progress felt slow.

Emma kept listening, but she felt stuck.

She started to worry.

For a few days, she looked for a new app, a new teacher, and a new method.

Then she had an idea.

She found one of her first English lessons.

She remembered that it had been hard.

She listened again.

This time, she understood almost everything.

She didn’t need the transcript.

She didn’t need to stop the audio.

Emma smiled.

Her English had improved.

She just hadn’t seen the change.

So she kept her normal routine.

She kept listening every day.

A few weeks later, another podcast felt easier.

Emma was happy.

She could finally see her progress.

02

SECOND VERSION

Present Tense

Emma starts learning English.

She listens every day.

At first, she improves fast.

After a few months, she understands more English.

She also answers simple questions faster.

Then her progress starts to feel slow.

Emma keeps listening, but she feels stuck.

She starts to worry.

For a few days, she looks for a new app, a new teacher, and a new method.

Then she has an idea.

She finds one of her first English lessons.

She remembers that it was hard at the beginning.

She listens again.

This time, she understands almost everything.

She doesn’t need the transcript.

She doesn’t need to stop the audio.

Emma smiles.

She thinks, “My English is better. I just didn’t see the change.”

So she keeps her normal routine.

She keeps listening every day.

A few weeks later, another podcast feels easier.

Emma is happy.

She can finally see her progress.

03

THIRD VERSION

Future Tense

Next year, Emma will start learning English.

She’ll listen every day.

At first, she’ll improve fast.

After a few months, she’ll understand more English.

She’ll also answer simple questions faster.

Then her progress will feel slow.

Emma will keep listening, but she’ll feel stuck.

She’ll start to worry.

For a few days, she’ll look for a new app, a new teacher, and a new method.

Then she’ll have an idea.

She’ll find one of her first English lessons.

She’ll remember that it was hard at the beginning.

She’ll listen again.

This time, she’ll understand almost everything.

She won’t need the transcript.

She won’t need to stop the audio.

Emma will smile.

She'll think, "My English is better. I just didn't see the change."

So she'll keep her normal routine.

She'll keep listening every day.

A few weeks later, another podcast will feel easier.

Emma will be happy.

She'll finally see her progress.

Excellent!

That's the end of the Point of View lesson.

If your English feels stuck, remember Emma.

Don't only compare today with yesterday.

Look back a few months. You may see more progress than you expect.

Keep listening to English you can understand.

Repeat useful material.

And give yourself time.

You can get the transcript at SpeakEnglishPodcast.com/podcast.

For more listening and speaking practice, visit SpeakEnglishPodcast.com/courses.

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

Bye-bye!

Review

Vocabulary from This Episode

Review the 12 key words and expressions before listening again.

01 **plateau** a time when progress seems to stop.	07 **adapt** to get used to a new situation.
02 **gradual** happening slowly, little by little.	08 **reinforce** to make learning stronger through repetition.
03 **noticeable** easy to see or notice.	09 **breakthrough** a moment when something suddenly becomes easier.
04 **lose motivation** to stop feeling the desire to continue.	10 **maintain** to keep something going.
05 **discouraged** feeling less hopeful because something is difficult.	11 **overlook** to fail to notice something.
06 **exposure** time spent hearing or seeing English.	12 **stick with it** to continue even when something feels difficult.

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