

EPISODE 004

Why Studying Grammar Is Not Enough to Speak English

Full transcript · speaking practice · vocabulary review

Hi, I'm Georgiana, and I'm back with a new episode of the Speak English Now Podcast—the podcast that helps you speak English fluently with no grammar and no textbooks.

Before we start, get the transcript. Visit SpeakEnglishPodcast.com/podcast.

And if you want to help me, share the podcast with your friends and family. That would make me very happy.

Thank you!

Great! Let's start.

Have you ever met someone who knows a lot about English grammar?

Maybe they can explain verb tenses.

They know the difference between the present perfect and the past simple.

They know many grammar rules.

But then, when they try to speak English, something strange happens.

They hesitate.

They translate.

They search for words.

It's almost like their grammar knowledge disappears.

Why does this happen?

Today, we're going to talk about why studying grammar is not enough to speak English.

And I'll introduce a technique I use in my lessons called Point of View, which helps you learn grammar through context.

Okay. Let's get started!

First, I want to clarify something.

Grammar is not bad.

Grammar can be useful.

It can help you understand how English works.

It can help you notice patterns.

It can help you organize what you know.

For example, if you want to understand why we use a certain expression, a grammar explanation can be very helpful.

But there is a difference between knowing about English and being able to use English.

Imagine you want to learn how to drive a car.

So you buy a driving manual.

Not a small manual.

A huge manual.

A very serious manual.

You read it from beginning to end.

You learn every traffic sign.

You learn what every button does.

You learn how the engine works.

You even learn the correct tire pressure.

After months of studying, you know a lot about cars.

You are basically an expert... at reading a book.

But then you sit in the driver's seat.

Someone says:

"Okay. Drive."

And you say:

"Wait a minute. I need to review chapter seven."

Of course, the manual is useful.

But reading a manual is not the same as driving.

You need practice.

You need experience.

You need to use the car.

Learning English is similar.

Grammar rules can help you understand English.

But knowing rules is not the same as using English naturally.

Many learners spend years studying grammar, but they don't spend enough time listening to and using English.

They know the rules, but the rules are not yet easy to use when they need them.

This is why learning English in context is so important.

Your brain needs examples.

It needs to see how English is used in real situations.

This is why I use Point of View lessons.

The idea is simple.

You hear the same story from different points of view.

The story stays almost the same, but the language changes.

Because you already understand the situation, you can focus on the changes in English.

You don't need to memorize a long grammar explanation.

You can simply notice the patterns.

Now, let's practice with a Point of View lesson.

Remember: I'll tell you the same story in a different way. Listen carefully and notice how the English changes.

Point of View

Grammar in Context

Listen to the same story in two tenses and notice how the English changes naturally.



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01

FIRST VERSION

Present Tense

Professor Grammar-9000 is the most advanced English-learning robot in the world.

The robot knows thousands of grammar rules.

It knows every tense, every exception, and every grammar explanation.

Students love Professor Grammar-9000 because it can explain any grammar question.

If someone asks:

“What is the difference between these two sentences?”

The robot answers immediately.

It is an amazing grammar expert.

But there is one small problem.

Professor Grammar-9000 cannot have a normal conversation.

When someone asks:

“How are you today?”

The robot becomes confused.

It searches its database.

It analyzes the question.

It checks the grammar rules.

And after several minutes, it says:

“I am experiencing a positive emotional condition.”

The person smiles and says:

“Okay... but I just asked how you are.”

The robot knows a lot about English grammar, but it needs more practice using English.

02

SECOND VERSION

Future Tense

Professor Grammar-9000 will be the most advanced English-learning robot in the world.

The robot will know thousands of grammar rules.

It will know every tense, every exception, and every grammar explanation.

Students will love Professor Grammar-9000 because it will be able to explain any grammar question.

If someone asks:

“What is the difference between these two sentences?”

The robot will answer immediately.

It will be an amazing grammar expert.

But there will be one small problem.

Professor Grammar-9000 will not be able to have a normal conversation.

When someone asks:

“How are you today?”

The robot will become confused.

It will search its database.

It will analyze the question.

It will check the grammar rules.

And after several minutes, it will say:

“I am experiencing a positive emotional condition.”

The person will smile and say:

“Okay... but I just asked how you are.”

The robot will know a lot about English grammar, but it will need more practice using English.

Excellent!

This is the idea behind Point of View lessons.

You don't study grammar rules separately.

You hear English used in a meaningful situation, and your brain starts to notice how the language changes.

Grammar is a tool.

It can help you.

But if your goal is fluency, you need more than explanations.

You need to spend time with understandable English.

You need to listen.

You need to respond.

You need to practice.

And little by little, English becomes more natural.

You can get the transcript for this episode at SpeakEnglishPodcast.com/podcast.

And if you want more structured listening and speaking practice, you can check out my premium courses at SpeakEnglishPodcast.com/courses.

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

Bye-bye!

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Review

Vocabulary from This Episode

Review the most useful words and expressions before listening again.

01 clarify to make something easier to understand.	07 structure the way something is organized.
02 useful helpful or practical.	08 meaningful having importance or purpose.
03 experience knowledge gained by doing something.	09 fluent able to speak smoothly and naturally.
04 context the situation that helps you understand meaning.	10 explanation information that makes something clearer.
05 technique a particular way of doing something.	11 practice repeated activity to improve a skill.
06 pattern a repeated way something happens.	12 automatic happening naturally without much thought.
 Georgiana Founder of Speak English Now Podcast SpeakEnglishPodcast.com	