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## Lesson 4. Learning to speak

### What do you need to speak at an advanced level of English?

Learning to speak at an advanced level of English requires two things:

1. Learning a lot of vocabulary and structures
2. Practising many hours

In the following lessons you're going to learn a lot about verbs, structures and vocabulary, so, in this lesson, we will focus on what to do to practise your speaking as much as you can.

### Ways to practise your speaking

There are three alternative ways to practise your speaking:

#### 1. Hire a private teacher

Without a doubt, the best choice is to hire a teacher because a good teacher can correct your mistakes.

#### 2. Do a language exchange

If you can't have a teacher, the next best solution is to have a language exchange.

#### 3. Speak to yourself

Before we talk about this last alternative, let's learn more about language exchanges.

- **What is a language exchange?**

It's an agreement between two people who speak different languages to teach each other their native language for free. So, you exchange your knowledge of Spanish for a native speaker's knowledge of English.

- **How long does a language exchange normally last?**



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Normally, one person teaches the other his own language for about 30 minutes and then they change roles.

- **Where can you find a language exchange?**

You can find a list of websites for practising your English below.

<https://www.speaky.com/> (app)

<https://www.hellotalk.com/> (app)

<http://www.mylanguageexchange.com/>

<http://www.conversationexchange.com/>

<http://www.polyglot-learn-language.com>

<http://www.interpals.net>

### **My recommendations:**

**1) Get at least two people (even better, three) to speak at different times.** If one fails, you always have another.

**2) If you find natives, perfect, but if you don't, do not close the doors completely to non-natives.** You can speak to a non-native who has higher level of English than yours perfectly well. One of my students, for example, practises with a Greek man and an American woman. The Greek man has a good level of English but is not a native.

**3) The more chemistry there is between your language exchange partner and you, the more successful your speaking practise will be.** The best language exchanges are not always someone your age or with the same job or hobbies. What works is to share the same interests and topics for speaking.

### **Topics to talk about**

Here you have a table of topics.



Move between levels.

Remember that many advanced students sometimes don't know the basics so it's good to practice talking about very simple things. It is with these 'beginners' topics that you can improve your pronunciation because you won't be worried about understanding the meaning or learning new words.

Day of the week	Beginner/low intermediate (A-2)	Intermediate- Upper Intermediate (B1- B2)	Advanced (C1)
Monday	100 most important words and pronunciation	10 Common expressions in English	Phrasal verbs in daily conversations
Tuesday	How to introduce yourself	Modal verbs	Family (advanced)
Wednesday	How to tell the time	Movies	48 Phrasal verbs
Thursday	Nationalities and languages	Getting a job	Yard sale
Friday	Everyday activities	Family	Get
Saturday	Let's talk about the weather	Pets	Expressions used at a restaurant
Sunday	What's London really like?	Countable- Uncountable nouns	Alcohol and drinking

#### 4) How to make your language exchange last?

If you find a great speaking partner, don't let him/her go. Prepare your Spanish lessons well, ask for feedback about your classes and correct his/her mistakes. In short, try to excel at teaching Spanish and create a lasting impression. In this way, your language exchange won't feel the need to look for someone else or stop the speaking sessions.

If you can't find a language exchange for whatever reason, the only thing you can do is to try to speak to yourself.

#### But how do you speak to yourself?

Repeat sentences and paragraphs as much as you can.

As I said before, we'll learn to raise our speaking level with the audiobook "The Picture of Dorian Gray" in the following lessons. You can also use simultaneously any other resources such as audios and videos, preferably with a transcription.

Here is an excellent page to practise to listen and repeat sentences.

[Manythings.org](http://www.manythings.org).



**To sum up:**

There are three ways to practise your speaking:

1. Hire a private teacher. This is the most expensive choice but it's without a doubt the best. A good teacher should correct your mistakes and teach you structures and vocabulary that would be difficult to learn on your own.
2. Do a language exchange. Be perseverant as it won't be easy to find the right person.
3. Talk to yourself. We'll use the audiobook "The Picture of Dorian Gray" as the main resource for speaking to yourself, but you can use other resources. For



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example, [www.manythings.org](http://www.manythings.org)