



3 Tips to Learn English As Your New Year's Resolution

0'00

Hello everyone! It's Hannah here from Virtually Fluent. We have just started a brand new year, so I wish all of you a very Happy New Year and that's exactly what we're going to be talking about today is New Year's Resolutions.

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One of my New Year's Resolutions this year is to try and make high-quality English-learning resources more accessible to more people. So what I've been working on over the Christmas holidays is opening my website for free to any person who would like to register. You can easily create a free account on my website today (<https://virtually-fluent.com/register>). I'll leave the link in the description below.

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With a free account on my website you can access some English-learning tips and advice, you can come and check out my profile, talk to me, send me any messages about your English-learning journey or if you want some tips and advice. We also have some free courses that you can access, our learning English with music courses, taking a few popular songs so you can learn English in a fun way and we have some free reading and listening materials with comprehension activities too. It's all completely free, come and check it out, the link is in the description below.

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So, that's been my New Year's Resolution for this year and getting off to a pretty good start. Now most of my students create the New Year's Resolution to learn and improve their English and today I'm going to give a couple of tips that will help you try and achieve this New Year's Resolution by the end of December.

1'48

So, one of my favourite parts of New Year's Eve celebrations with my family is everybody getting together just before midnight and discussing what their New Year's Resolutions are for the following year. Now, I always choose the typical ones; to go to the gym more often, to drink less alcohol, to keep in touch with my friends and family more regularly, not particularly inventive. And January always starts off really well, it seems like a breeze, I'm proactive and I'm really nailing all of these New Year's Resolutions. By the end of January, my commitment starts to wane a little bit and by the time we get to mid-February most of my resolutions are a thing of the past.

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I'm a really committed person and I always see my projects through but when it comes to New Year's Resolutions, I just find it so difficult to actually get to the end of the year and achieve this resolution.

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Now, last week our spring semester of the Virtually Fluent Academy started so we've got lots of new groups and private classes that have started and I always ask my students at the beginning of January "what's your New Year's Resolution?" The most common one I hear in lessons is "to learn and improve their English" throughout the year. Maybe they're just saying this because I'm their English teacher asking but I think it genuinely is a common New Year's Resolution for a lot of people.

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So I want to give you three little pieces of advice that will help you effectively approach your New Year's Resolution of learning and improving English and also how you will know by the end of the year whether you have actually achieved this or not.

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So my first tip is to make it a real and a specific resolution. When you say "I want to learn English", what does this really mean? There's not a specific goal that you're working towards, so we need to make this more specific, more accurate, provide more details.

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Some examples could be if you're working towards an English exam, like a Cambridge exam, that you achieve a specific grade or you pass said exam. It could be that you want to learn a specific number of new words by the end of December or it could be that you want to watch a certain amount of films or read a certain amount of books in English by the end of the year.

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Now, I remember back in one of my secondary school classes in PHSE where my personal tutor told me that when you create a goal it must be SMART. So this is an acronym for five different words. It must be specific, it must be measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound. So when you're creating your resolution about learning or improving your English throughout the year, make sure it has all five of these characteristics.

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My second piece of advice is to try and break your resolution down because 12 months is a really long time to try and achieve a resolution. We always start off really motivated and committed at the beginning of the year, then we kind of put it

off until December, it gets to the end of the year and we realise we haven't actually achieved the goal that we wanted to.

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So what I recommend is breaking it down into "mini-resolutions" instead. Set miniature goals for every three months, every four months, every six months. And this way you can also easily see your progress throughout the year. When learning a language (especially at the higher levels of a language - upper-intermediate/advanced) it can be really difficult to see any progress so by setting yourself miniature goals, such as learning a certain number of words or being able to converse fluently in your English classes, by setting those every two, three, four months, you'll be able to see your progress much more easily by the end of the year.

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And my final piece of advice is to be realistic with your expectations. I honestly think that this is where I fail with my own New Year's Resolutions because over the Christmas period I'm with my family, I'm with my friends, we eat a lot, drink copious amounts of alcohol, don't do any exercise at all and then I set this resolution in January to go to the gym two/three times a week or to have dry January and not drink anything at all and it's completely unrealistic, it's a massive shock to the system.

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If you create high expectations for yourself that are unrealistic expectations then you're going to be disappointed at the end of the year and you're probably not going to achieve that New Year's Resolution. You're not going to become fluent in a language in twelve months. I'm going to smash that mirror for you right now and tell you that is not possible.

6'41

Learning a language does take time, it's a life-long skill that you constantly work towards throughout your life. It's very difficult to put a specific number on how long it takes to learn a language because everybody has different situations. Generally, some research shows that you need around 100 hours of English class time plus additional practice (so conversation, watching films, reading books in English), so let's say around 125-150 hours and that's to progress from one level to another. If you're studying English for only one hour a week, it's going to take a fair part of the year to even progress from one level to another level. Given that there are six levels in English (A1, A2 etc...) it's completely unrealistic time-wise to think you are going to become fluent in the space of 12 months.

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On top of that, only learning English one hour a week is not consistent enough to actually work towards fluency in a language. So let's lower the expectations and make them more realistic. You can become fluent over a period of years and, of course, there are people who have special situations, they live in an English-speaking culture or a country and they can obviously become fluent much more quickly. But set yourself more realistic goals. I know, there are hundreds of online English courses that promise you'll become fluent in three months or four months, I'm just going to say right now that's not true, it's a marketing ploy.

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So, hopefully with those three little pieces of advice you can create more specific New Year's Resolutions to learn and improve English throughout this year and hopefully by December at the end of this year you will be able to say that you have achieved your New Year's Resolution in English.

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Now, if you find it difficult or you don't have the resources to learn English for free, please just head over to our website. As I said at the beginning of this video, we've now opened the registration on our website, so it's completely free. We have

reading resources, listening resources, a blog and you can easily interact with other English learners going through the same experience as you.

8'52

You can also subscribe to our YouTube channel and don't forget to turn notifications on. You can see lots more videos on our YouTube channel to help you learn English with vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar explanations, using English in real life and (just like this) English tips and advice for your learning journey. We're also across all social media, you can find us everywhere, all of the links are in the description below. So, I hope to see you on our website very soon, remember it's free! This is Hannah from Virtually Fluent, bringing English to life.