



## Why Learning English Isn't Free Transcript

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**0'00**

Hello everyone! It's Hannah here from Virtually Fluent and today I'm going to be answering the question in my own personal opinion as to why learning English isn't free. To test your understanding of everything I say today you can take our free listening comprehension quiz, the link is in the description below. All you need to do is click on it and register for a free account.

**0'35**

"Why aren't your classes free?" "Can I chat with you to practise my English?" "What free learning resources do you have?" These are questions that I receive on my social media and from current and former students on a daily basis. Today, I want to look at why learning a language, not just English, any language, isn't necessarily free.

**0'58**

I get it. We want to be as economical and cost-effective as we possibly can, especially when it comes to learning probably the most spoken language in the world. We kind of expect everything to be free and available at your fingertips. But as an experienced professional in the teaching English industry, it's so painful to hear this question "why aren't your classes free?" "why are you so expensive?"

**1'27**

For me, it's a completely baffling situation because I highly doubt you would walk into a hairdresser's and say "can you cut my hair for free?" or to an accountant and say "can you do my accounts for free?" or to a private lawyer and say "would you defend me in court for free?"

## **1'45**

Now the teaching English as a Foreign Language, which we call the EFL industry, is slightly different. It's a huge industry but, in my opinion, it is a completely damaged industry. Now there are so many great EFL teachers out there, a lot of my colleagues who have spent their own time and money getting qualified, taking their teacher training certificates, getting that all-important teaching experience and obviously learning everything there is about the English language, specifically in detail.

## **2'19**

Unfortunately, the industry also has a lot of unqualified teachers and these are often native English speakers who are on a "gap year" or a "year of self discovery" and they want to "teach" English just for a little bit of extra cash while they're travelling. And, of course, this completely overloads the EFL industry with unqualified teachers, just a group of native English speakers and it also undervalues the work that actual dedicated, qualified and experienced EFL teachers do, both morally and financially.

## **2'52**

Now I have a lot of friends who did the latter. They're native English speakers travelling abroad and expected that it would be really easy just to "teach" English. You don't need to know much about the language, it's just speaking. How wrong can they be? There is so much about the English language that a native speaker does not know, specifically the grammatical structure. This is

because we're not taught this in the education system in America and here in the UK.

### 3'22

Let's take this example sentence: **If I had learnt English with a qualified English teacher, I would be more advanced now.** Now if you ask an average native English speaker to explain this sentence, why the tenses are being used, what the grammatical structure is, you'll probably find most of them struggling to provide some sort of explanation. However, if you ask a qualified EFL teacher you're very likely to get a very different response with much more information about the structure.

### 3'55

In this particular case it's a mixed conditional and mixed conditionals have two separate parts. They're normally separated by a comma. In this example sentence, the first part is part of the third conditional. So in this structure, we have if plus subject then we have the past perfect tense (which is had plus the past participle - had learnt). If I had learnt. The second part of the sentence is part of the second conditional and this is the structure would plus infinitive verb - would be. And we use this particular mixed conditional to talk about a regret in the past, something you wish you'd done differently and how that particular regret impacts the present time.

### 4'43

And with an English teacher, you're more likely to go on to continue some activities, some exercises to practise using this structure and, of course, in conversation/ real-life too.

### 4'50

So if you compare the response of a potential native English speaker with very little understanding of the English language to a qualified and experienced English teacher, you will get very different responses.

## **5'08**

This is because qualified English teachers know what is best for their students. We undertake training exactly for this purpose. We analyse the strengths and weaknesses of a student. We plan lessons according to those particular strengths and weaknesses, focus on specific skills and topics that we believe our students need and, of course, provide encouragement and a positive learning environment to make sure that your students feel more confident using the English language. These are all skills learnt through teacher training and through experience of teaching and they're not necessarily something that you would find, possibly at all, with just a native English-speaking traveller.

## **5'47**

Now I am an avid reader of Facebook posts, particularly in the "learning English" groups, there are lots of them online and on the most part they're really great environments for learning English but it never fails to surprise me with the amount of bad-quality resources that are uploaded. Perhaps if you'd contacted an English teacher who was qualified and experienced then perhaps you wouldn't be learning English in the incorrect way, learning these little mistakes.

## **6'18**

Now, another question that I receive a lot on my social media is "can I chat with you via Facebook or via Whatsapp to practise my English?" but I sadly have to politely decline all of these questions and I'm often faced with quite a lot of abuse and aggressions from students who want to speak on Whatsapp or on Facebook.

**6'42**

Now this is understandable when you have a native English speaker at your fingertips, you want to take advantage and speak to them, but just remember that English teachers work day and night to teach their students, generally their paid students. The last thing they really want to do in their free time is teach again and for free. They want to spend time with their family and their friends, do the activities that they like doing in their free time.

**7'08**

Now I understand because I've been in the same situation myself. A few years ago I started learning Spanish. In 2016 I moved over to Barcelona and I had zero knowledge of Spanish, absolutely nothing, so it was completely essential for me to learn the language. I didn't have a job, I'd only just moved there, I was completing teacher training, so I was basically looking for the most cost-effective or (if possible) free resources to learn Spanish.

**7'36**

So the first thing I did was start with a tandem programme, so I enrolled in this group for free and exchanged with various Spaniards to practise my Spanish. Obviously from level zero it's completely impossible to hold a basic, even a basic, conversation and most of the people I was paired with just wanted to practise their English. So that was a fairly unsuccessful situation.

**8'02**

The second thing I did was look for academy courses. Again, I look for the cheapest one possible. The quality of teaching was not great and I spent a ridiculous amount of money on course materials, course textbooks. I think they ended up in the bin fairly shortly afterwards.

**8'19**

And the final thing I did was look for private classes. Again, the most cost-effective private classes. If do think, perhaps, it was a Spanish native speaker who was just sort of “teaching” Spanish on the sideline. The lessons were not great, there was no planning, just a bunch of printed worksheets and this person would often sit at the side, just on their phone or laptop, while I was filling in gaps and not even relevant exercises to my level of Spanish. And there were a lot of cancellations, last-minute cancellations, “sorry, I’ve got this or that”. So it was a really bad learning experience. In total, I wasted about two years going through these cost-effective means of learning Spanish and I regret that so much now. I wish I’d just spent something on a good academy course, perhaps only for one semester but my Spanish would have been so much further along that wasting two years of learning.

**9'17**

So I’ve been in your shoes and I understand that you want it to be the most cost-effective, if not, free method to try and learn English. I, myself, try to offer as much time as I possibly can in my week to help people learn English for free. There are a few resources that I offer, so if you are interested come and take a look.

**9'14**

For beginners in English, and I please emphasise that this is absolute beginners (level zero), I have a free course, which is ten weeks, two hours a week online, teaching English, the very basics of the English language. Please do not treat this as a refresher course if you are interested. I have had refreshers before and they drop out after two/three weeks, wasting the space for other potential students.

**10'07**

I have a free blog on my website for reading practice on a weekly basis.

**10'12**

I have my YouTube channel, where I try to post as many video explanations as possible about the English language.

**10'18**

You can register for a free account on my website for reading comprehension practice, listening comprehension practice.

**10'25**

And I also have a few free courses online for specific English grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation topics and also learning English with music through some of the most popular songs.

**10'37**

So I try my hardest to offer as much as possible but please understand there are so many people who teach English as a foreign language as their living and cannot offer all of their resources, all of their time, to providing free education.

**10'52**

So I do ask from the bottom of my heart not just for me but for all of my colleagues in the EFL industry, that when you do contact an English teacher about learning English and they provide their prices or the cost of helping you achieve your goal of learning English, please take into consideration everything that I've said today.

**11'11**

Just think. Think about the job that you do. Would you offer your free time (from 9-5, your working hours) for free to help somebody else learn the same skills that you do. Just think about that.

## **11'24**

Don't forget to subscribe to our YouTube channel and turn notifications on to see lots more English videos just like this one, with English tips/advice, information about the EFL industry and, of course, English grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation explanations. This is Hannah from Virtually Fluent, bringing English to life.