



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

Full article: <https://virtually-fluent.com/3-tips-to-learn-english-as-your-new-years-resolution/>

One of the most traditional parts of my New Year's Eve celebrations is shortly before midnight, discussing what my New Year's Resolution for the following year will be. I usually go for the typical resolutions; go to the gym more often, **drink** less **alcohol**, keep in touch with my loved ones more regularly, not particularly inventive. It always starts off well and the first few weeks of the year seem like a breeze. By the end of January, my commitment starts to wane and by mid-February my New Year's Resolution is a thing of the past.

I am a committed person and I like to see things through but I can never seem to get through a New Year's Resolution.

Last week our Virtually Fluent Academy started its spring semester and in all my group and private classes the only response I heard to "what is your New Year's Resolution?" was "I'd like to learn and improve my English". OK, many students are probably just saying that to me because I'm their English teacher but this is a very common New Year's Resolution and a great one too!

So how can we effectively approach this New Year's Resolution of learning and improving English and how will we know whether we've achieved this or not by the end of the year!

Make a SMART Resolution

"I want to learn English" is too broad and we need to be more specific about what exactly we want to learn in English. Perhaps you're working towards an English qualification and your goal could be to achieve a certain grade or to pass said exam. Perhaps you could set a number of new words you want to learn this year. Perhaps you could aim to read a certain book or watch a certain film in English by the end of the year.

I remember one of my secondary school classes in PSHE class where my teacher taught me the importance of goals being SMART- specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound. You should set an English-learning resolution that has all five of these characteristics.

Break It Down

12 months is a long time to achieve a resolution and you can easily keep putting it off until you get to December and realise you've failed to achieve your goals yet again. Set yourself "mini-resolutions" to achieve every 3 or 4 months. This way, you'll be able to see your progress throughout the year and you won't leave it until the last minute.

Be Realistic!

One of the reasons I tend to fail my own New Year's Resolutions is because I choose completely unrealistic goals. Having not gone to the gym over the Christmas period at all and having drunk copious amounts of alcohol with my family and friends, to suddenly expect myself to change all of this is completely unrealistic.

Don't expect yourself to learn hundreds of thousands of new English words in a year or suddenly become fluent in just 12 months. I'm going to smash the mirror right now and tell you this isn't going to happen. Learning a language takes time. It's difficult to put an exact figure on it but research shows you need around 100 hours of English class time and then an extra 50 hours of practice in real life to progress from one level to another. If you only study one hour a week, this will take you around half a year to progress to the next level. Given there are six levels in English (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2) it's unrealistic to expect yourself to become fluent in the space of a year.

I know, I know, there are hundreds of online English courses that promise you'll "be fluent in 3 months", sadly this is untrue.