

How to Teach Children English

Welcome to The Effortless English Show with the world's number one English teacher, AJ Hoge, where AJ has more than 40 million students worldwide finally learn English once and for all without the boring textbooks, classrooms and grammar drills. Here is AJ with a quick piece to help you learn to speak fluent English effortlessly.

Hi. I'm AJ Hoge, the author of Effortless English: Learn to speak English like a Native. Go to effortlessenglishclub.com. Sign up for my free email course, effortlessenglishclub.com.

Teaching your children English. A lot of people on Twitter and Facebook ask me, "How can I teach my child, my son or daughter or even nephew or niece, how can I teach them English? What's the best way to teach my children English?" It's a good question, and I'm going to tell you some quick secrets today in the show about how to do that, some easy methods.

Now, first of all, let me tell you what you should not do. Do not send your child to an English school or a class. Don't do it. I do not recommend English classes or schools. Now, when I was younger, I taught in those schools. I lived in Korea. I taught in a school for children, an English school for children. In Japan, I did it. In other countries, in Thailand, I did it. And these school, these English schools for children have the same problems as English schools for adults. They use textbooks. They use a lot of worksheets. And they just are not effective. What happens with most children when they go to these schools is that the children get bored, and in their mind, the children learn English is boring. English is difficult. English is not fun. English is not natural. So they start to hate English or at least not like it. And because of that, as they get older, they never really master speaking English and they get a lot of negative feelings about English.

So don't send them to a school. It's not necessary. You can teach your own child English. Even if your English is not perfect, don't worry. It's okay. It's much better for you to do it. Why? Because your child even if it's just a niece or a nephew, they have a strong emotional connection to you, right? They love you. They care about you, so they want to make you happy. They want to communicate with you. They want to have a connection with you. So you are the very best teacher for your child. Don't worry. If your grammar is not perfect, if your pronunciation is not perfect, it's okay. Later when they get older, your child can improve their pronunciation. They can improve their grammar. But you can give them fluency. You can do it. It's best if you do it.

So how? How do you do it? How do you teach your child English? First of all, I recommend that maybe one or two hours a day, you have English time with your child. This could be in the morning. This could be in the evening. If you're working, when you get back from work, whenever. It doesn't matter. But one hour at minimum. Two hours would be better but if you do it for many years, one hour a day is enough.

What do you do during that time? First of all, let me tell you, don't use books. Don't use textbooks. Don't use worksheets, none of that school-type stuff. It's terrible. It's boring. It doesn't work. The first thing you're going to do is you're going to teach your child using something called TPR, total physical response. It means using actions, physical actions. You're going to teach your child just as you taught them at their own language. See, when they were a baby, they learned your language and you didn't think about it probably as a parent. You just automatically did some things and your baby

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automatically learned the language. Well, you're going to do these things a little more consciously. You're going to think about them a little more to help your child learn English a bit faster.

The first thing you do is you use actions. Why? Because actions are easy to understand. Kids love them. Even adults love them. So you start very easy. What you do is you first demonstrate the action and you say the English. Uh, in the beginning, it must be very simple. One or two words only. Keep things very, very short and easy. So the most basic lesson would be like a game you could do. It's called Simon Says where you do an action and you say it and then you have your child do the same. So first, you would be sitting down. You would say, "Stand up." Say it in English. "Stand up," and then what do you do? You point to yourself and you stand up. Stand up. The child looks at you. You can even tell them the meaning if you want in your own language but no translation is necessary.

Then, you say, "Sit down," and then you show them. You sit down. Then, you say again, "Stand up," and you do it. "Sit down." You do it. Then, you point to them. You get them to do it with you. Stand up. Sit down. Stand up. Sit down. So they start doing the actions with you as you say the English. Now eventually, they will learn stand up and sit down.

So then you can start to add more words. You could say, "Stand up quickly," or you could say, "Stand up fast." It's not exactly grammatical, but it's common. We say it a lot, so you can say, "Stand up fast" or "Stand up quickly" and you can sit down quickly. And then you could introduce slowly, so you say, "Stand up slowly," and then you slowly do it. "Sit down slowly" and then you slowly do it. And you do it. You demonstrate until they understand the meaning then they do it with you. You do it both together. You stand up slowly then down. Then, you can make it a game, right? You say, "Stand up quickly" and then have to do it quickly. Then, you say, "Sit down slowly." Oh, now they got to do it slowly. So you start giving commands but you don't do it yourself. You just sit there. You say it and they have to do it so you're testing their understanding.

If they don't understand you, if you say, "Sit down slowly," but they're still not understanding, then just demonstrate it again, then you do it again to show them. And it's just kind of a game, right? You're telling them to do stuff and they have to do it. And you do it in a fun way and you're kind of laughing like a game. If they make a mistake then you laugh like a game and then you just show them the correct way to do it.

Then, you can start teaching them things like pick up, pick up. So you have some tape, so you'd say, you have them on the table and you say, "Pick up. Pick up." And then you, then you do it together, then you tell them to do it, "Pick up," and then they pick it up. Right? And then you can start to teach nouns, things, so you could say, you could say, "Tape. Tape." You could say, "Jacket." Right? "Shirt." And then you can use the nouns with verbs so you could say, "Pick up the shirt." Maybe you put a shirt on the floor or on a table. "Pick up the shirt," and then you pick up the shirt. "Pick up the tape," and then you pick up the tape. You know, and then you can teach them, "Put down. Pick up. Put down. Pick up. Put down."

This is a great way to teach lots and lots of nouns, lots of things with just pick up and put down. You can also use point, point to, point to the tape. Point to the shirt or point to the ceiling. Point to the floor. Right? So using point, pick up and put down, teach those verbs first, those phrases, then you can start to teach lots of things all around your house, saying, "Pick up. Put down. Point to." Then, you can teach the verb go, right? Go or walk, either one. You could say, "Go to the door. Go to the

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chair. Go to the table. Go to the bathroom. Go to the kitchen.” Right? And they go, go, go. Now you're teaching go and again, you're teaching more and more nouns. All right. So you get the idea and you just keep adding more and more verbs and vocabulary.

Now this method is only good for really what we call concrete things, so you can't teach, you can't teach things that are not visible that you can't touch. It's good for actions. It's good for nouns, for things that they can see. So teaching a word like democracy is, you can't really do that with actions. It's too difficult, democracy. It's just, that's an idea that it's only in your head, but you, but it doesn't matter. When they're children, they don't need words like democracy. They don't need these difficult words. Teach them real things. They can learn a lot of vocabulary and a lot of nouns this way and a lot of verbs too.

A big tip about using this, this method, TPR or action vocabulary, is you only do it a small amount of time. The biggest mistake people make, that teachers make is they try to do this for too long and then the kids get bored. So you only want to do this each day, 10 to 15 minutes is enough. After 10 or 15 minutes, the kids will start to get bored of just that, you telling them what to do and doing these actions. So short amounts only. You could maybe do 10 minutes in the beginning and then 10 minutes at the end, right? If you have one full hour each day, well, in the first 10 minutes, you do this. You do the actions and you learn more vocab and you practice old vocab. And then maybe at the end, you could 5 or 10 more minutes.

So what else do you do? If you have an hour, maybe that's 15 minutes of actions. What do you do the rest of the time? Well, you just play with it. You have English playtime. So you know your child. What do they like to play with? Maybe they like to play with dolls. I mean if they're a boy, they might like, you know, action guys and making them fight and stuff or maybe little animals or trucks and cars. If it's a girl, maybe they play with little dolls and the little houses and stuff, whatever, sticks, rocks. It doesn't matter, but you play with them.

And what you do, this is the important part, your job, you sit down, you play with your kid. But as you play with them, you narrate in English. Narrate. What does narrate mean? Narrate means to, it's like to, to tell, to tell about. It's like storytelling. So all you do is as you play, let's say we have a, you know, you got two little dolls and you, and let's say they're boys and they like to fight. So you have this one and and this doll hits the other one. Well, you just say what's happening. You just say it out loud in English. Use super simple English, a few words. So you say, “He hits him, uh, uh,” and then you make them hit. “He hits him, um, um, um. He cries,” (cries). “He falls down.” So you just play and as you're doing things, just say what is happening in English. Try to use the most simple words. Try to use very, very short sentences, very short. And try to repeat the same useful common words a lot.

You also can narrate, say what your child is doing, right? So if they, if they sit down, you say, “Oh, you're, you're sitting. You're sitting down. Oh, you like that. Oh, what is that?” You can even start adding questions which is a little more advanced. But in the beginning, just narrate constantly for 40 minutes while you play. You just say what's happening. It's like you're watching and describing it. Imagine you're on the phone with someone and you're just telling them what is happening. He's doing this. You're doing that. And you're just constantly narrating in English again and again what is happening.

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Now eventually, your child will start to learn after, you know, several weeks of doing this or several months. Your child will start to learn the very common words and phrases that you're narrating with. That's the most useful English. That's great. Don't make your child speak. No pressure for them to speak. Let them speak in your language. It's okay, but you answer in English. So if they want to ask a question, they can do it in their language, but you always speak back in English. You can also use pictures. You can draw pictures to help them understand.

Another way to use narration is with children's books, right, children's picture books? Children's books are great because they have lots of pictures, so I recommend Dr. Seuss' books. They're really great for kids, for children, young children. They have funny, crazy pictures. Now you of course, you can read the story to them in English. You can read it, but that's usually kind of difficult. So first you read the page, get something very, very easy for small children. But then what you do is you narrate the picture so you point to pictures on the page and you can say, "Oh. This is a dog. This is a cat. The cat is hungry. The dog is angry, grr." Right? So you, you don't have to just read. You can describe everything in the picture to them.

A little more advanced. As they start to learn more, you can ask questions. In the beginning, ask questions and then you answer them. This is the technique I use in my story lessons, in my interactive lessons, right? So you might say the same, it's a picture, a picture book. It has a dog and a cat. So you could say, "What's this?" Point to the dog. "What's this? Oh, it's a dog, right? It's a dog, yes?" And then you say, "What's this? Oh, it's a cat. Oh. Is the cat hungry? Yes, the cat is hungry. Is the dog angry? Yes, the dog is angry." Right? So you're asking questions and also answering them and let your child kind of, oh.

And eventually, your child will start to do this automatically. Probably it, you need some months before this happens, but eventually your child will start to say, "Oh, it's a dog. It's a cat. He's angry." Sometimes they'll just point in the beginning and just say, "Dog," one word, "Cat." That's fantastic. Use the same storybooks over and over. Your child will have favorite ones so read them again and again and narrate. Describe what's happening and ask these questions and answer them.

Finally, the last thing in general as you teach your child English, everything should be fun and relaxed, fun and relaxed. This should not feel like lessons. If you make it feel like school, if you make it feel like study, they will hate it. It will be boring. You won't like it either. There's no reason for that, right? It's just like when they learned their own language. You weren't making them do worksheets. You just talked to them. You played with them. You looked at storybooks together. You told them to do things. Come here. Hello. Well, it's the same idea. You're just doing it in English and you're doing it in a little bit more organized way, but your child should feel like they're just having fun playing with you, enjoying time with you, looking at storybooks with you, etc.

And the final thing too is with kids, it's best to focus on concrete, real-world things. As I mentioned before, ideas. These are called abstract ideas. Things that are only in our minds, ideas like democracy or fairness, that's for more advanced when they get older. When they're young, I mean up to like even 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 years or even teenagers, when they're young and below that age, just focus on things they can see and touch, things that are real. You could also do feelings because we can see the feelings in our face, right? Grr, uh, hungry. Those are kind of also very direct experiences. Don't worry about advanced ideas with kids. They're not ready for that. Focus on real-world things that they can experience directly.

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All right. Enjoy teaching your children English. Do this and they will grow up loving English. They'll love English. They'll enjoy English and they'll become fluent in a very easy and automatic way. And then when they're older, they can start learning more advanced vocabulary. When they're older, they can learn writing and more advanced academic things. But if they're already fluent because of you, they will have a huge advantage, huge advantage over most other students. So you're really helping your child when you teach them English this way.

Go to effortlessenglishclub.com and join one of my English-speaking courses, effortlessenglishclub.com. See you soon. Bye for now.