Speaking skill :

The ability to speak confidently and fluently is something which children will develop during their time at school, and something that will help them throughout their life.

Speaking skills are defined as the skills which allow us to communicate effectively. They give us the ability to convey information verbally and in a way that the listener can understand.

Children will learn English speaking skills as well as speaking skills in other languages, in primary and secondary school. Learning how to develop English speaking skills is so important for ESL students and EAL students too. It's one of the most important parts

of language learning as speaking is how we tend to communicate in everyday life. Speaking is an interactive process where information is shared, and if necessary, acted upon by the listener.

IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING SKILLS :

Speaking skills are one of the most important skills we learn, as they allow us to communicate with others and express our thoughts and feelings.

Speaking skills can be separated into formal and informal speaking skills, and we use both types of speaking skills in a variety of contexts throughout life.

Informal speaking skills are important for conversations with friends and family, helping us to form emotional connections. Formal speech, on the other hand, is necessary for workplaces, in presentations or for conversations with people you don’t know. Formal language is important as it helps us to make a good impression on people and communicate politely.

As student, speaking skills are considered the most important part of learning a language. In fact, many language learners measure their performance by how well they can speak it. As most effective foreign language learning takes place through interaction, it's a skill that can be honed to really build an understanding of the language and culture of English- speaking countries.

3 MAIN ASPECTS OF EFFECTIVE SPEAKING & ELEMENTS OF SPEAKING SKILLS

# Vocabulary:

To develop our speaking skills, we first need to know the right words.

Vocabulary development begins when we are infants, as we learn to describe the world around us and communicate our needs. This progresses from single words to sentences when children are 2 or 3, at which point they will normally have a vocabulary of 150-300 words.

# Grammar:

You may think that grammar is something we only need for written language. But grammar includes lots ofimportant areas for spoken language such as an understanding of tenses and the correct way to structure sentences. Grammar helps us to convey information in a way that the listener will recognise and understand.

 **Pronunciation:**

Understanding how to correctly pronounce words is another important element of speaking skills. We learn how to pronounce words by listening to those around us, such as our parents, friends and teachers. Pronunciation varies from country to country, and even city to city!

# Fluency:

Fluency in spoken language is something that naturally develops as children go through school, as they are using and practicing speaking skills

METHODS TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILLS

**1. Listen**

The first step in improving your speaking skills is actually working on your listening.

Listening to English has several benefits – it allows you to pick up new words, phrases, and ways to respond in conversations. Secondly, listening provides opportunities to understand pronunciation, how some words are omitted when speaking, how some are joined together, the rhythm, the intonation, and the sounds of language.

The third most interesting way to improve your listening and speaking is by listening to **audio books**. Audio books have become very popular over the past couple of years. They are great for people who are have no time to invest in reading books. They are also a wonderful way to perfect your pronunciation. [**Here**](https://www.digitalbook.io/blog/free-audio-books-for-english-learners/) is a great selection of books for people who are learning English. Try to listen to a portion of the text, pause the audio, and read aloud to practise saying the words yourself.

Finally, nothing can beat actual **English conversations** with people. Listen to your colleagues speaking in English, listen to your boss giving presentations and conduct meetings in English, listen to your teacher speaking in English – all of these real-life conversations will help you become a better listener and a better speaker of the language. Remember that listening as much as possible will help your speaking significantly.

**2. Imitate**

Now that you have listened to lots of English conversations, it’s time for some imitation. Yes, that’s right! Imitating or copying someone is a wonderful to improve your speaking skills. Not convinced? Watch babies and children – how do they learn a language? They copy everything an adult says.

Another benefit of imitation is that it will help you become more accurate in English without having to learn grammar rules. With lots of practice you will begin to remember chunks of words and phrases. This helps in remembering word patterns in a sentence and how certain words go with others.

To effectively improve your speaking skills, you need to follow these steps:

* **Listen:** Pick your favourite video or audio clip from any of the sources provided in the earlier section of this article. Play the audio and listen to it carefully. Play as many times as you like to understand how each word is spoken.
* **Repeat and record**: After playing the audio, repeat saying the words and conversations exactly as you heard. Pay special attention to the intonation, stress, and rhythm of language. Record yourself while repeating the words. You could use a voice recorder on your phone or a use a web-service like **[Vocaroo](https://vocaroo.com/%22%20%5Co%20%22Opens%20in%20a%20new%20tab%20or%20window.%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**. Recording will provide you an opportunity to listen to yourself and self-correct. So, do not skip this step.
* **Compare:** Listen to the audio again and compare it with your recording. Does it match? Note down changes that you may need to make.
* **Correct:** Repeat the entire process again until you get better and more accurate.

As this process involves listening to the same audio clip several times, choose a topic that is interesting to you. If you stick with the routine, you will see improvement in your pronunciation, vocabulary, accuracy, and overall speaking abilities in no time!

**3. Read**

Reading is yet another important skill to have when learning a language. Whether you prefer a novel or an article, reading a few minutes every day will help you acquire new vocabulary.

The most common reason why people hesitate with reading is that it takes quite a lot of time to read a book from start to finish. However, when learning English, reading even for a few minutes is greatly beneficial. **Short articles** or notes in English are great for this. They only take a few minutes to read and are quite easy to find.

You can start with **materials you find every day**. Think of notes and memos at work, pamphlets and brochures at your local supermarket, or notices and safety instructions in the elevators – wherever you are there is always something to read.

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**4. Reflect**

Reflection is a very useful step in improving your speaking skills. Reflection is nothing but asking questions to think about what you learnt, how you learnt, what progress you see, what could be done differently, and how to change the way you learn to allow progress.

It is important to reflect on your language learning abilities on a daily basis, especially if you are learning a new language independently. Reflection is another way to provide yourself some good feedback in the absence of a teacher.

Say you had a great conversation in English. After your **conversation** is over, take a moment to reflect. Ask yourself questions such as the following:

* How was it?
* How much did you understand the other person?
* How confident did you feel in responding to the questions asked or continuing the conversation?
* How comfortable did you feel about the topic of discussion?
* How quickly were you able to think of the right thing to say or the right word to say?
* Did you come across any unfamiliar words?
* What did the other person do when they couldn’t think of the right word?

Thinking about these questions will help you see your strengths more clearly and gain confidence. You will also find opportunities for improvement and specific areas to work on.

You could also reflect after **reading or listening** to something in English. Ask yourself these questions.

* What are some of the key points you learned from the article or podcast?
* Can you summarise them in your own words?
* Are there some words or ideas that were new to you?
* Can you use the words and sentences around the new word to guess the meaning of this new word? Look up a dictionary soon after to confirm if you really got the meaning right.

Recording your reflections in a notebook after every learning session will help you see your progress over time.

**5. Prepare**

A lot of us hesitate to speak or take part in conversations in English because we are nervous about what to say. We are anxious that what we say may not be appropriate or we may make mistakes. We can easily fix this problem by preparing ahead. Are you going to a restaurant with your colleagues? Think of situations that require you to speak English. Order food, perhaps? Ask for changes to a dish? Ask your colleagues’ preferences? Ask for the bill? What vocabulary do you need in these situations? Write up a simple list of phrases to use.

Here is an example:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Situation** | **Useful phrases** |
| Arriving at the restaurant and asking for a table (if booked) | *Hello. We’ve booked a table for \_\_\_. (say the number of people for which you booked the table)**The booking is in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ‘s name. (say the name of the person you provided at the time of booking)* |
| Arriving at the restaurant and asking for a table (if not booked) | *Hello. We need a table for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (say the number of people). Can you fit us in?* |
| Asking for the menu | *Could we see the food menu, please?**Could we see the drinks menu, please?* |
| Asking about food | *Is this dish suitable for vegetarians?**Does this dish contain nuts? I am allergic to nuts.**Could you help me understand what this dish contains?* |
| Choosing what to order among your colleagues | *I’d like to order a hamburger with a side of fries. What about you?**I prefer coffee to tea.**What would you like to have?**Do you prefer soup or salad?**That sounds delicious.* |
| Placing your order | *We are ready to place our order.**Could we have bottled water for everyone?**I would like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (say what you would like to eat)**Could I have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (say what you would like to eat)?* |
| Giving feedback | *That was delicious. Thank you.**That was lovely. Thank you.**It was a great meal. Thank you.* *The food was a bit cold.**The dish was a bit spicy for my taste.* |
| Paying your bill | *Could we have the bill please?**Can I pay by card?* *This is on me. (When you want to insist on paying for everyone).* |

**6. Speak**

Yes, speaking. There is no magic pill that would help you speak better. You must put yourself in situations where you are forced to speak in English to get better at it. Start small. Do you live or work at a place where you need to speak English to get by? Great! Take advantage of this situation by **speaking to people around you**. It could be at your workplace or even at a coffee shop – doesn’t matter where, as long as you can speak.

If you don’t have that advantage, practise speaking in English with your **colleagues or classmates**. It is easier if you choose someone who speaks a different language than you do as it forces you to communicate in English.

**7. Practise**

We cannot stress this enough. Regular and consistent practice is the key to success when it comes to speaking English. The tips and suggestions that we’ve described above only work if you use them regularly. So, here’s what we recommend. **Start small** – spend just 10 minutes every day doing 1-2 of the above things. Maybe listen to a short video clip today and imitate. Reflect on what you learned. Tomorrow, pick up a short article. Read aloud and summarise in your own words. Reflect on what you read and the new words.

Some days you will find more time. **Dedicate more time when you can** but do the minimum every single day. You will see a big change in your abilities in no time! As you improve, you’ll get more confident and more ready for bigger challenges. This is the time to find **speaking** **partners** and to put yourself in situations that require speaking in English. Don’t worry about making mistakes. Most people don’t care if you make mistakes.