

How to

**TRACK YOUR
PROGRESS**

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Hello! Hello!

There's no better way to self motivate than to hear your own progress. In order to do that, you need to track your learning habits.

- How much time do you spend on each language skill every week?
- What activities are you doing?

With the systematic approach I provide in this guide, you will be able to gauge which activities, or combination of activities, help you achieve the results you're after.

Nobody wants to waste time or effort, right?

Take a few moments out of your day to track your progress, and you'll become a more self-sufficient and efficient language learner.

Your teacher,
Shana Thompson
ESL Teacher from California



Setting Goals

Step 1: How many hours do you listen/read/write/speak in English per week? Do the math.

Many of the people I used to speak with on a weekly basis had the goal of improving their spoken English, yet they only spoke English once a week—with me. That translates to approximately 35-45 minutes per week.

In order to know how to improve a specific skill, you need to build awareness of what you're *currently* doing.

This is your baseline.



Setting Goals

Step 2: Ask yourself: What is my end goal?

What do you want to be able to do in 90 days, or whatever time frame you've set for yourself? *Keep in mind that 90 days is ideal time frame to create a new habit.*

Make sure that your goal is specific, achievable, and ideally, measurable. Here are a few examples of speaking goals:

- To speak to a native speaker non-stop for 15 minutes.
- To talk about my hobbies in English without freezing.
- To tell a short story in English using past tenses smoothly.

Step 3: With your goal in mind, think of a commitment you can make and achieve.

The best way to achieve long-term success is by creating a routine. How much time can you realistically dedicate to language learning each week?

For example: 4 days a week, 30 minutes each of those days.



Tracking Progress

Step 1: If your goal is related to pronunciation or speaking, track your progress with audio or video.

Audio is great for tracking pronunciation and fluency. Video is will also allow you to track confidence, body language, eye contact, and hesitation. I've found it best to stick to one medium for easier evaluation.

Choose the option you'll actually use consistently.

Store your files in the same place and organize them clearly. Use folders or file names like these:

- Speaking - Day 1
- Speaking - Day 30
- Speaking - Day 60
- Speaking - Day 90

In order to start the process of tracking, you need to make a Day 1 recording. **The Day 1 recording is important! Don't practice too much! We want this recording to reveal your actual level.**



Tracking Progress

Step 2: Make Your First Recording

Most cell phones nowadays come with a built-in voice recorder. If you have an iPhone, you can use *Voice Memos*. If you have an Android, many devices come with a *Recorder* app. Some, like *Google Recorder*, on the Google Pixel, support searchable transcripts.

When you're ready, start recording.

- **Record something related to your goal!** If your goal is to tell past-tense stories, tell a story in the past. If it's to be able to speak about your hobbies, do that.
- **In the video, mention how much time you spend on each skill** that month to discern how your activities affected your progress. (*This month, I listened to podcasts for 8.5 hours. I wrote a 3-page paper on my dream house, and talked to a teacher for 2.5 hours. In total, I spent 14 hours studying English.*)
- **Speak for 3-5 minutes.**

Save it! You'll come back to it later on.



Tracking Progress

Step 3: Consider posting on YouTube ... even if under "private" or "unlisted"

Many people don't dare post their progress for others to see, but there are some perks to it. That's why polyglots do it all the time.

Making language progress videos visible to the public is a way to make an "official" commitment to improvement. The world can see the commitment and can help support, motivate, and follow up.

I can say from first-hand experience that posting my poorly prepared French and Esperanto videos helped me stick to my 90-day learning commitments.

TIP

If you post a video, I recommend mentioning your commitment in the video title (for example, *American English Podcast: Speaking Day 1*). This will help others find you.

Even if you don't feel comfortable posting your progress to the world, I still recommend posting on YouTube, or another video platform, and labeling it as private or unlisted! That way your videos are stored in one spot.



Reward Yourself?

Studies in behavioral psychology suggest that we are more likely to stick to our commitments when rewards or consequences are attached to the results.

If you need to create a consequence or reward for yourself, do it! Just be sure someone else is able to hold you accountable. With that in mind, it may be smart to tell someone else about your goal and ask them to check in on your progress.

Some research on accountability has found that people are significantly more likely to complete a goal when they commit to another person and schedule regular check-ins.

Reward example:

As a reward for achieving my specific language-learning goal—studying French for 30 minutes a day, 4 days a week, for 90 days—I'll book a trip to France.



What to Study

Many of us are able to improve drastically simply by adding time to the amount of time we practice.

And practicing doesn't necessarily need to be speaking all of the time. By listening, reading, or writing we can impact our ability to speak articulately, more elaborately and with ease.

You should experiment with your learning process:






- Answer the writing prompts in Step 3 of lessons.
- Use 10 new words from an episode in your own original sentences.
- Watch TV shows in English. Did you hear new words? Write them down and look them up! You can even use them in your own story.

Get creative! Keep the process fun.



Example

Goal: 30 minutes a day, 4 days a week
Speaking Focus

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
 read 30 min. wrote about podcast 20 min.		 read 20 min. did lesson on website 30 min.	 listened to the podcast 30 minutes	 spoke to English teacher for 1 hour	 watched Friends in English. Wrote sentences with new words.	

Meanings



Every day that you meet your 30-minute goal, mark the day. I use a checkmark.



Since my goal is 30 minutes a day, 4 times a week, 4 checks is a successful week.

End of Month

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
✓	✓	✓	✓			
	✓		✓	✓		✓
✓	✓		✓	✓		
✓	✓	✓			✓	

At the end of the month, after filling out your document, total the number of hours you worked on each activity.

For example: Reading: 3 hours, Writing: 4 hours, Speaking: 3 hours, Listening: 4 hours

Now that the month is over, it's time to make your progress video. Be sure to mention the hours you worked on each activity.

**NOW COMPARE
THIS MONTH'S
RECORDING TO
YOUR LAST ONE.
EVALUATE AND
ADJUST YOUR
ACTIVITIES BASED
ON YOUR
PROGRESS.**

Month 1

Goal:

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.

Month 2

Goal:

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.

Month 3

Goal:

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.

Month 4

Goal:

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.

90-Day Evaluation:

Evaluation

We can learn a lot from ourselves just by creating a system to evaluate our progress.

You may notice in your video that you spoke more quickly or that you are more fluent than in the last video, but that your vocabulary didn't improve much.

If that's the case, spend more time learning vocabulary.

- Master the 10 words/phrases per episode that I chose for you, or choose 10 of your own! Write original sentences with them, or a story. Your choice.
- Step 3 contains three questions related to the topic. Answer the questions in as much depth as possible.

By writing or speaking (step 3), you complete *The Fluency Loop*. This drastically increases retention of new vocabulary.



Evaluation

Did your speaking skills improve?

If not, check to see how many hours you spoke and used your speaking skills. Adjust. Next month, increase the number of hours you spend speaking, either to yourself, a language partner, or teacher.

It's not rocket science. Marking your progress takes minimal effort on a daily basis, and in the end, if done well, it will help you reach your goals and develop healthy learning habits.

Optional: Fill out the “Track Your Progress” form.

At the end of every week, I highly suggest documenting how much time you've spent on each skill that week.

Doing this will can give you direction. This will also allow me to better assist you when you need it.



AI in Evaluation

Using AI for Writing Evaluation

Writing is the perfect low-pressure activity to prepare you for speaking. It's an output, so it forces your brain to retrieve information. It's similar to having a conversation, but writing gives you more time to prepare.

ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude.ai are fantastic resources for getting written work corrected quickly and accurately. You should get in the habit of writing and getting corrected right away. This is one of the fantastic perks of AI. It also saves your work in one place.

Use this as a template:

"Do not edit the text, just the punctuation. Give suggestions below the text for improvement. Explain each suggestion."



AI in Evaluation

Using AI for Speaking Evaluation

You can quickly create transcripts with your audio for free using services like Otter.ai. The transcripts can be extremely useful in the evaluation process, whether you decide to evaluate, or you have AI evaluate you.

Post the transcript directly into AI and ask for feedback.

It can help you notice pronunciation issues, grammar mistakes, and vocabulary gaps. It can also be a great indicator of when you use filler words (like, “like,” “um,” and “you know”).

After you get an evaluation, you can post both the text and the suggestions in the comment section.

Why this is useful:

- It allows us (you and I) to see what needs work. In the long term, these responses can help us fully evaluate your level. It's easier to be proactive with more data.
- By posting in the comments, it serves as proof that you have completed “The Fluency Loop.”





*Thanks for
reading!*

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