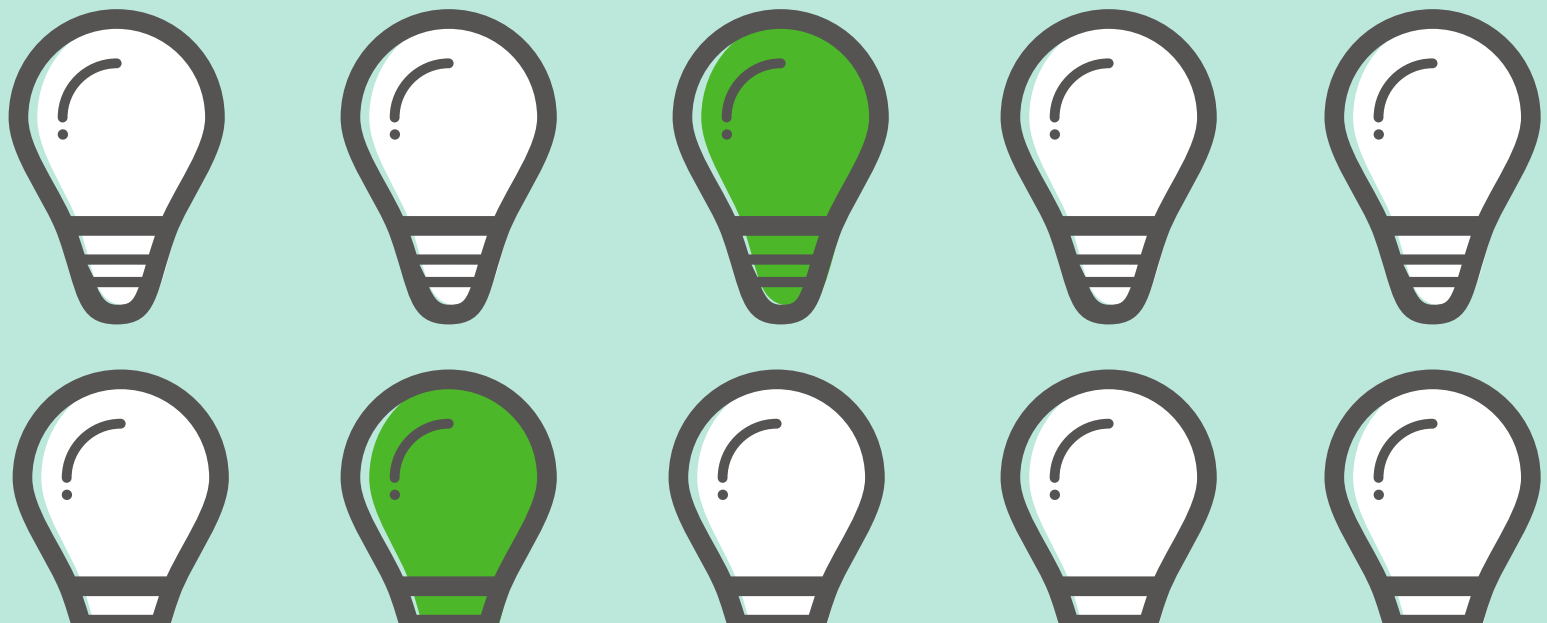




BY TOM BARAN

THE 4 STEPS TO LEARN ENGLISH

HOW TO BUILD YOUR
ENGLISH FOUNDATION



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A Note From The Author

Hello!

My name is Tom Baran and I am the author of ***“The 4 Steps to Learn English: How to Build Your English Foundation”***.

I am also a Say Hey English teacher and writer for our email blog. It's nice to meet you and thanks for downloading our ebook!



I know the first thing you're thinking - "Whoa. This is over 40 pages long. That'll take forever to read. How about I just skim it or skip to the end?"

Don't do that.

Although the page count is long, I've broken up paragraphs into very small chunks so it is easier to read for English learners like you.

You can read this book in less than 1 hour. Yes, that's right, only 1 hour. If you do 1 Step a day, which takes just 15 minutes, then you'll be done in 4 days.

So please, read the entire book and learn how you can quickly build your English Foundation.

Enjoy Reading,
Tom

PS - At the end of each Step, you will be given a Challenge. This ebook only works to improve your English if you actually complete the 4 Challenges! So don't leave this part out!

**YOUR
ENGLISH
FOUNDATION**

Think about the first time you started studying English.

What did you do? Were you learning at school in a classroom? Did you start watching movies or listening to music in English?

Whatever your answer is, you probably did not seriously study English. Perhaps it was a hobby, or something you did every once in a while.

But now, things have changed.

You're reading this ebook because you want to take your English to the next level. Perhaps you're learning to advance in your career or to travel more.

How can you do all of this? Well, if you want to speak English fluently with confidence, then you must first build your English Foundation.

English Foundation

Look at this picture to the right. What do you see? There's a building under construction of course, but look more carefully.

Notice how the bottom level, what we call in English the building's "foundation", is more complete than the top.



It has more pillars, steel beams, and structure.

This is because the foundation is the most important part of a building. It supports all of the other floors and top levels.

If a building or a house has a strong and sturdy foundation, then it can last for many decades, even centuries sometimes.

But, if the foundation is weak and unstable, then problems will develop in just a few short years.

So what about you? What is your English Foundation like?

Is it strong and sturdy? Has your English dramatically improved? How often do you speak English? Are you speaking with confidence?

Or is your English Foundation weak and unstable? Has your English stayed the same, or even gotten worse, over the past few years? Are you shy when other people start to speak in English?

Whatever your answers are, be sure to write them down in your notebook or journal.

Alfredo, a business owner and former Say Hey student from Colombia, had the most basic English when he joined our program.

His vocabulary was extremely small, he could not have a conversation, and he easily become confused when listening to others speak.

Although he had these limitations, Alfredo decided he wanted a stronger and more complete English Foundation, which is why he joined Say Hey's community.

Here's why this story is important for you.

Your English Foundation may be weak.

You may not know much English like Alfredo or maybe you know a lot, but you don't practice it enough, so you've lost some knowledge and confidence.



Either way, the good news is you can always start over and turn things around, just like Alfredo did.

You can build a new, stronger, and better English Foundation when you fully commit yourself.

Follow these 4 steps and you will build a strong and stable English Foundation, leaving you feeling positive and confident when you speak English.

**STEP 1:
FIND
YOUR
"WHY"**



English Emotions

Many people feel different emotions when they speak English - nervousness, joy, confusion, acceptance.

Stop for a moment and think about this question.

How do you feel now when you speak English?

Pick 3 emotion words from the word art image and write down your answer in your notebook or journal.



Now, let's turn that question around. **How do you WANT to feel when you speak English?**

Again, select 3 emotion words from the word art image and write down them down.

Is your answer different from the first question?

It probably is. I remember when I first started speaking Spanish with other people. I was only a freshman in college and I had recently moved to Chicago - a city full of native Spanish speakers.

One of the reasons I moved to this city was I would have more opportunities to practice my Spanish. Yet in the first few months, I was often nervous and hesitant to start a conversation.

I solely talked with people I knew well and this was done only occasionally. Because of this, my skills did not improve too much.

Nonetheless, by practicing and talking little by little over time, I was slowly able to conquer my fear of making errors and not understanding what people said.

First, I started talking more often to the people I knew. Then, I even started talking to new people!

I conversed with the cleaning employee on my floor, moms of the students I tutored at an after-school program, and even waiters at Mexican taquerias.

Did I still make errors and not understand people sometimes?

Of course!

But the big difference was I no longer had that fear that prevented me from using my language skills in daily conversations.

How does this story relate to your English journey?

Well, perhaps you, like me many years ago, feel scared even though you want to feel confident when speaking.

Julian, an entrepreneur and current Say Hey student from Brazil, definitely felt this way. **“I was afraid to speak in English and make mistakes.”**

Before you can overcome this fear, you need to clearly know and understand your current and desired English emotions.

This will help you build your English Foundation.

Before moving on to the next section, write your 3 selected emotions in this sentence.

When I speak English, I want to feel _____, _____, and _____.

Remember this sentence, because shortly we will connect it to your "why".

Your "Why"

People learn English for different reasons. Some want to achieve a higher paying job, make more friends when traveling, or better enjoy English music and movies.

Why are you learning English?

Take your time and think hard about this question. If you're still stuck and don't know your "why", [then go to our page here and see what some other English learners have said to get some ideas.](#)

After you know your "why", ask yourself "Why is this important to me?"

You can write down your answers in the following format:

I am learning English because _____.

This is important to me because _____.

When you complete these sentences, please help encourage other learners by telling them why English is important to you!

Sharing your "why" with other people is a great way to strengthen your English Foundation.

[>> Share Your "Why"](#)



Now, your desired English emotions - the first sentence you wrote - and your “why” form a powerful tandem.

When you read these sentences together, a connection is created between the reason you’re learning English and the emotions you want to feel.

This sends a compelling message to your brain so that whenever you think of your “why”, you will also feel these 3 emotions.

These two phrases will give you the motivation to continue learning English when things get hard and challenging, so remember to read them aloud when you are learning and studying!

Affirmations

These are great exercises to do. They help us better understand ourselves and our English journey.

But how do we make sure we don’t forget about how we want to feel and our “why”? What can we do to integrate these statements into our English Foundation?

To help us with this, we will utilize affirmations.

An affirmation is a positive statement that you will repeat to yourself every morning.

There is scientific research proving that affirmations help people achieve their goals and dreams.

By telling yourself these positive messages each and every day, you will start to embody your affirmations and live them out in your daily life.



Of course, they also require hard work, which we will cover in Step 3. For now though, affirmations are an outstanding first step to establishing a solid English Foundation.

So, what are your affirmations?

You just wrote them down a short time ago. They are:

I am learning English because _____.

This is important to me because _____.

When I speak English, I FEEL _____, _____, and _____.

Did you see the change in the 3rd affirmation? The phrase "I want to feel" was eliminated and replaced with just "I feel".

Why should you make this change?

"I feel" is much more dynamic and active. "I feel" helps you focus on the now, and not the future.

You might be thinking "But I don't feel these emotions now, I feel the other ones - scared, lonely, shy, etc." And yes, that is true.

However, by repeating the "I feel" positive affirmation each morning, you will slowly start to believe this statement until it actually becomes true.

That is, saying "When I speak English, I feel friendly, respected, and confident." will actually make you more friendly, respected, and confident!

It is truly mind-blowing what affirmations can help you achieve.

Challenge #1

1. [Share your “why” with other English learners here.](#)
2. **Read your English affirmations** to yourself out loud when you get up each morning. Do this **every day**.

I am learning English because _____.

This is important to me because _____.

When I speak English, I FEEL _____, _____, and _____.



STEP 2:
SET A
GOAL



Even though they sound similar, your English learning goal is different from your “why”.

Your “why” is based on your emotions and feelings. It may or may not include part of your goal, and that’s okay.

A goal, on the other hand, is a specific objective. It’s something you want to achieve that is usually quantitative.

Creating a detailed and focused purpose for learning English - also called your English goal - is the next crucial step in establishing your English Foundation.



Why do we need a goal in the first place?

Quite simply, a goal makes your actions intentional and gives you something to work towards.

You may be thinking “I already know my goal - to improve English.”

This is obviously true; because if you are reading this ebook then you want to improve your English.

But this objective does not help you much.

Instead, I encourage you to make a more comprehensive and inclusive goal. To do this, you are going to use the SMART goal approach.

SMART Goals



This acronym narrows the focus of your goal. Let's look at each letter individually.

Specific

A vague goal will not help you improve your English.

In fact, it may make you even less willing to work hard and practice your linguistic skills because you're not sure of what you need to accomplish.

On the other hand, a specific goal can help keep you concentrated on the most important task.

"Improve my English" is not specific, but you could change that to "Converse with a native speaker using only English". That is much more defined.

Now you know the action you are taking (converse), who you are doing it with (native speaker), and how you will do it (only English).

Measurable

Making a goal measurable allows you to keep track of it and monitor your progress over time.

To exemplify, if your goal is "Converse with a native speaker using only English," then we must add a quantifiable benchmark.

A fantastic way to implement this step is to add a time goal to your conversation.

Consider this - "Converse with a native speaker for 15 minutes using only English".

By adding in a time goal (15 minutes) your main goal now becomes measurable.



You can track your progress and see how long you can talk with a native speaker using only English - 3 minutes, 5 minutes, 8 minutes - until you reach your stated time goal of 15 minutes.

If your goal is not oriented on conversation, you can still add other quantifiable benchmarks.

Some different examples are the number of words written in a research paper or essay, the number of speaking errors made in a work presentation, or the number of words per page you don't understand while reading a book in English.

Attainable

A good SMART goal will be both realistic and risky.

That is, it should be a goal that you can accomplish, but it should be hard and challenging for you to do.

Look at our example goal - "Converse with a native speaker for 15 minutes using only English".

How hard is this for you?

If you are already at an intermediate level and it is only slightly hard, then you should increase the time goal, maybe to 25 or 30 minutes.

If it is incredibly, impossibly hard because you are at a very basic English level, then perhaps you decrease the time goal to 7 or 10 minutes.

Remember, your goal should be realistic and achievable, but also risky due to the hard work and dedication required.

Relevant

A relevant goal will be applicable, important, and exciting to you.

Is talking to a native speaker applicable to your life? Do you, or will you, talk to native English speakers when you work, travel, or simply as friends?

If so, then great! That goal is applicable to you.

If not, then you need to change something that will be applicable to your daily life. It could be talking to non-native speakers in English or interpreting an English programming code.

But how do you know if a goal is relevant to your life?

You should ask yourself, "Is this goal important to me? Will I have fun doing this? Is this exciting?".

Make sure that you are answering these questions for yourself! **Don't respond thinking of your boss, your spouse, nor your friends.**

Because in order to achieve your goals, you must be intrinsically motivated, and that starts with what you want.

If your goal benefits other people too, that is great, but it must originate from your internal desires.

One last note - your goal will not always be fun. In fact, many times it will be incredibly hard and painful.

Nevertheless, during both the good and the bad times, your goal should always inspire you.

Time-Based

A goal without a deadline is like a wooden ship without a sail.

It may move with the current and you can paddle it along some, but the wind, the deadline, is what gives it its true speed and force.

Without the wind - your time deadline - your progress towards your goal will be extremely slow and inconsistent. A time-based deadline keeps you disciplined and focused on your English goal.

So when do you want to accomplish your goal?

You're probably thinking "within one year", but that is too far away.

Your mind will wander and forget about your goal because it seems to be in the distant future rather than the immediate present.

Research has shown that the sweet spot for time-based goals is around 90 days, or 3 months. Personally, I like to express my time in days, instead of weeks or months.

A day is much shorter than a week or a month, so this kickstarts our brain into immediate action. An easy way to do this is by counting out 90 days from today, and putting that specific date at the end of your goal.

Here is the example English goal after going through each letter of the SMART goal acronym:

"Converse with a native speaker for 15 minutes using only English within 90 days (by February 28)."

Compare that to the original goal, "Improve my English".

Which objective would you rather be working towards?

The new SMART goal is incredibly more powerful, inspiring, and effective.

Your English Goal

Now, take your time and write your own English SMART goal. You can use this diagram to help you.

Example Goal: Converse with a native speaker for 15 minutes
verb/action *measurable, attainable, relevant*
using only English within 90 days (by February 28)
specific *time-based*

Your English Goal: _____
verb/action *measurable, attainable, relevant*

specific *time-based*



Challenge #2

1. [Share your English Goal](#) with Say Hey's community [here](#).
2. **Check 1 other person's English Goal** using the SMART goal criteria. Did they correctly use each letter?

[Reply to their comment here](#) and tell them if their English Goal is correct or if they need to fix a few things.

3. **Read your English Goal** to yourself out loud when you get up each morning. Do this **every day**.



STEP 3:
WORK
HARD



You have your English goal, you're feeling excited, and you know that you can accomplish anything!

Undoubtedly you will achieve your goal, even though you know it's risky and will be difficult.

But how will you do it?

"Well, it will just happen because I know what I want now," you say, or "I'll practice English every now and then."

As soon as those words leave your mouth, you realize they're empty and hollow and your goal is unlikely to be met without some type of structure and schedule.

Welcome to Step 3 Work Hard, otherwise known as the goal graveyard.

A graveyard is the same as a cemetery; it's a place where people are buried after they pass away. **It is here, in Work Hard, where most people quit and stop actively trying to learn English.**

After a few weeks, their goals are forgotten and they die soon after. These poor goals, who had such a short life, are quietly buried into the ground, never to be seen again.

Why does this happen?

The answer is actually quite simple - this step requires the most discipline, consistency, and effort.

Most people want learning English to be easy.

That's why they watch hours and hours of Netflix in English and they tell themselves "I'm practicing my English" without a word of English ever leaving their lips.

You might be one of those people. That's okay!

It's never too late to change.

Keep reading and I'll teach you a better and more fun way to learn English and let your goals live a long and happy life.

By now, you already know what you want to accomplish and why from Step 1 Find Your Why and Step 2 Set a Goal, but you don't know when, where, and how you will do this.

Before we answer those key questions, let's start with some self-reflection.



Self-Reflection

There's a saying in English - "Hard work pays off."

It's true, but the problem is that most people do not work hard when they are learning a language.

Instead, they work "okay". Or sometimes, they work really hard for a few weeks, but then stop.

These people, and perhaps you yourself, are stuck trying to learn English year after year. Since they don't work hard, they don't make much progress.

In short, if you don't work hard, your English Foundation will break and crumble to the ground.

So, are you working hard right now to improve your English?

Answer these questions to help you think about this:

- Do you prioritize English?
- When do you do your homework?
- Do you look for opportunities to speak in English with other people (not including classes)?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, what grade would you give yourself for "English hard work"?

If you're like most English learners, you probably are not very proud of your answers.

Now that you're face to face with the truth, you see that you have not been working hard to learn English for a long time.

The good news is that these feelings of disappointment and guilt also signal a great opportunity for you to grow and advance.

You know that you are highly capable of mastering English. You also recognize English as important in your life - that's why you are reading this!

So you're in a great position to work hard, you probably just need a little guidance and structure.

Make a Schedule

The definition of consistent is "marked by regularity or steady continuity; free from variation or contradiction."

When learning a language, you must be consistent. And one of the best ways to be consistent is to have a schedule.

Think of the routines you have in your life.

Perhaps you go to the gym to work out two times a week after work. Or maybe you have a movie night with your family or spouse every week.

Whatever your routines are, they are consistent. They rarely change and you do them every week, usually without thinking.

Just like these habits, you want to make speaking and practicing English a routine in your life.

Remember Alfredo, the former Say Hey student from Colombia we read about in the introduction?

He was the hardest working student I've ever taught before.

He had a strong “why” that propelled him through his hard work - he, his wife, and his son were moving to Canada in 6 months.

To help him achieve his goal, he set a schedule to practice English for one hour every day, sometimes even for two hours.

This time was usually split between talking in English to his son and wife and formally studying English grammar and content. And to his credit, he never missed a day!

6 months later, he was having a full English conversation with me and felt confident when speaking to native Canadians.

So, how does Alfredo’s story relate to you?

You’re probably thinking “Tom, I don’t have time to practice English for one hour every day!”

That’s true, most people don’t, and that’s not the point of the story.

The point is that Alfredo was consistent with his English schedule.

He committed himself to practice the language, and because he always followed through on that commitment, he achieved his English goal in record time.

You can accomplish your English goal too by working hard and being consistent, even if it’s only for 15 minutes a day.

To integrate English into your schedule, start by answering these questions.

- When will you practice English?
- Where will you practice English?
- For how long will you practice English?
- Who will you practice with?

Finally, here's the last question and the most important one:

How can you incorporate fun ways of practicing English into your schedule?

If you're still having trouble with these questions, look at some of these examples from current Say Hey students.

"I will practice English at work by speaking to my boss in English for 15 minutes every day." - William, Software Engineer, Brazil.

"I will talk in English for 20 minutes every day with a coworker and with a friend." - Andy, Accountant, Dominican Republic.

There's a few things to highlight in these statements.

First, notice the emphasis on talking and speaking. Speaking is the most difficult language skill to learn and it requires the most practice and use.

When speaking is neglected, you start to forget phrases and vocabulary and ultimately you lose some of your English knowledge.

Therefore, when you're scheduling your practice time, I highly recommend that you prioritize speaking above your other language skills.

Second, these students are speaking English daily for a brief amount of time - just 15 or 20 minutes.

Be honest with yourself - you don't need to study English for one hour every day. In fact, if you try to do that, you will most likely fail.

Instead, try to integrate short practice periods but make them *consistent* and do them *every day*.

This consistency will produce small daily gains that add up and make a big difference over time.

Third and last, these students are practicing English with other people. They are not studying alone in their rooms.

Instead, they are interacting and having fun conversations with their coworkers and friends.

When looking at your schedule, remember that learning English together with other people is both more fun and more effective, which takes us to the last step.

Challenge #3

1. **Share this ebook on social media** and **find a friend** to practice English with.

[Share on Facebook](#)

[Share on LinkedIn](#)

[Share on Twitter](#)

OR

[Share with this link](#)

Don't skip this step! You will be surprised at how many people are looking for a partner to speak English with.

2. **Follow your English schedule** and practice English **with your conversation partner** for the whole week.

Make a check ✓ (followed schedule) or an X (did not follow schedule) mark for each day.

3. [Comment on our page](#) and tell us your English partner's name and how often you are practicing English.

Ex: I am speaking English with Rebecca for 15 minutes every day.



**STEP 4:
JOIN A
COMMUNITY**



Have you ever tried to play a sport alone?

Maybe you practiced juggling the soccer ball by yourself or you shot some hoops on the basketball court solo.

How long did you practice for? How much did you improve? Did you have much fun?

My guess is that you probably stopped after a short period of time, felt bored, and improved only a little.

Now, compare that experience to a time when you played a sport with a team.



Think about a time you played soccer with your friends or were on a school sports team.

How long did you practice for? How much did you improve? Did you have much fun?

This time, my guess is completely different. I think you probably practiced a long time, maybe 2 hours a day every day of the week, and therefore over time you dramatically improved your skills.

I'm also assuming that you had a lot of fun while playing the sport and hanging out with your teammates.

You probably made memories that still stick with you to this very day and make you think fondly upon that time.

The Wrong Places

Just like sports, learning English is a lot more fun and effective when you're part of a team.

It can be hard, uneventful, and lonely when you are working towards a goal by yourself. It's easy to give up when nobody is counting on you or helping you out.

I sometimes see this with English learners who are reluctant to practice their English with other people.

They tell me "I'm learning English by myself," or "I get too nervous for classes."

Unfortunately, after a few weeks they usually give up or have not made much progress towards their goal.

Nevertheless, there is a much larger group of English learners who know they need to connect with people and find a team to help them obtain their English goal.

Perhaps they join a Facebook or a WhatsApp group and start chatting with people, or they propose a language exchange to someone who is learning their native language.

These people have good intentions, but they are usually looking in the wrong places for a language community.

Why?

Simply put, social media and other language exchange apps are usually too informal and superficial for you to really connect with someone.

There is lots of opportunity with these groups but low to no commitment.

Sure, you could talk every day to people there or even exchange calls now and then, but have you committed to doing this?

Has anybody in these groups promised to themselves and the other members that they will help you with your goals?

Typically the answer is no.

The Right Places

Okay, so where can you find a committed, hard working English learning community that will work as a team and help you solidify your English foundation?

In my experience, there are two key areas where you should look - your network and English providers.

Your network consists of family members, friends, and coworkers who you interact with.

They know who you are and what is important to you, and you know these same things about them too. You probably have similar values, hobbies, or goals.

Because of all this, you know these people would work hard to help you, and you would do the same.

Within this group, you want to find 2-4 people, plus yourself, who can make a commitment to each other to work on your English learning goals.

One person is not enough, because if they stop learning English or you fall out of touch, then you no longer have someone to count on.

Remember, we want a community, not just a partner.

This community should be dedicated to learning English just as much, or even more, than you are. That way, whenever you interact with them, they will elevate your language skills and keep you focused on your goal.

Once this community is established, you want to integrate some formal practice time into your schedule that we made in Step 3 - Work Hard.

Your group should be meeting and speaking English together at least once a week.

You may be thinking, "That sounds great Tom, but I don't even know one person who is committed to learning English, let alone four!"

I agree that it definitely does require more work and effort to make your own community or find one that already exists in your network.

The easier and faster option is to turn to an English provider.

An English provider can be an organization, a school, or a company. They provide English instruction to students and learners who sign up for their services.

Now, each English provider will have a different type of community.

Some have in-person classes, so you get to meet your teachers and classmates in a physical, brick-and-mortar environment. Other providers prefer to focus on flexibility.

They let you learn English online whenever you want, with no predefined schedule, but because of this, you'll have a different teacher and classmates each time you log on.

Say Hey is a mix of the two.

We provide English learners with a live webinar each week with the same teacher (me!) and students. We also give video lessons and speaking evaluations for you to do independently.

This way, you get to know me as a teacher and form real relationships with your peers, while simultaneously enjoying the flexibility and comfort of learning from your home.

We, in effect, become your English community.

Each week, we're working on your goals and speaking together as a team, so you can feel more confident when talking to other people.

But don't just take our word for it.

Here's what William, the software engineer from Brazil we read about earlier, says about Say Hey's community.

"Learning English through Say Hey is awesome! The classes are funny and helpful, the homework is challenging and the teachers are very supportive. I highly recommend it!"

Listen to a different perspective from Julian, an entrepreneur and current Say Hey student from Brazil, as he talks about his experience.

"Say Hey is the best place to learn English. Before, I was afraid to speak in English with another person and make mistakes.

However, I got an amazing teacher who gave me the confidence to talk without fear. The instructors are extremely supportive and friendly. Go ahead and try it!"

With his newfound English confidence, Julian recently achieved his goal of traveling abroad to Europe and using English during his vacation to make friends and have an amazing trip.

He had the largest smile on my face when he told me his travel stories and how Say Hey helped him to have the experience of a lifetime.

Just like Julian, you too can achieve your English goal and feel great about it when you have a supportive English community to help you along the way.

Challenge #4

1. Join an English community that practices speaking together at least once a week.

Find one among your network.

OR

[Join me and other Say Hey students here.](#)

By clicking this link, you will get 1 week completely free to try out our program. You fill out a quick form, select a plan, and then enter your credit/debit card information. That's it!

You can cancel anytime and you will not be charged until after your first week.

Some of you may be thinking, "Is this really safe? What if I don't like it?"

I absolutely understand this hesitation and fear.

It's normal to feel scared and unsure before taking a big step forward in your English learning journey.

Nevertheless, after completing the *4 Steps to Learn English*, **you know deep down that joining an English community is crucial to your English foundation and success.**

Don't wait any longer, [join our community today and start feeling confident in your English and in yourself.](#)



**DON'T
FORGET**

Have you kept your journal or notebook with you the whole time? Have you been answering the questions as they come up?

If not, go back and answer these questions RIGHT NOW!



So now that you have absolutely answered all previous questions, let's re-evaluate your English foundation.

- How does your English foundation look now?
- Is it strong and sturdy, resting on the foundations of each step?
- Do you know your "why"?
- Have you set a goal?
- Are you working hard?
- Did you join a community?

If so, then you are in a great position to improve your English every day and achieve your goals.

As long as you maintain your English Foundation with timely repairs and adjustments, you will be feeling confident and motivated every step of the journey.

PS - Did you join a community yet?

This is the *one step* that most people leave out, but it is the most important one!

Remember the sports analogy - learning English will get hard and boring if you do it by yourself.

But together with me as your teacher and other learners on your team, it will be loads of fun and you'll have people to help you.

Don't wait, [join our community today and achieve your English goal.](#)

