

Notes for Using This Resource: Students

This podcast was created with advanced learners of English in mind, but it can certainly be useful even if you do not consider yourself to be at an advanced level yet. Because this is a natural conversation between native and near-native speakers of English, you may find some of the vocabulary challenging. Don't worry if you are not able to understand 100% of the conversation, but just try to follow the main ideas and use the show notes to help you. You may find that reviewing the vocabulary and other show notes before listening can help prepare you for what you will hear. After the conversation, you can go back and review the notes to choose words and phrases that you would like to know more about.

Don't feel that it's necessary to learn everything in the notes given for each episode; this list is simply a guide to help you understand the conversation better and for you to become aware of words and phrases when you hear them again. Often we hear vocabulary in conversations, but we don't really notice it because we are just trying to follow the main idea. This gives you a chance to focus more on those words and phrases that you might not otherwise have noticed. You will find that once you become aware of a particular word or expression, you start to notice it over and over again when other people are using it. And this is the first step in learning new vocabulary. Once you have heard something in context many times, it starts to become natural to you.

A great way to use these notes to increase your vocabulary is to keep a journal of words and expressions that you want to remember. Maybe just choose 5-10 from each episode to focus on. You will notice that the definition and/or explanation for the word/phrase is given, and quite often there is also an example sentence for context. You may wish to include all of this information in your journal, but also think of your own idea for a sentence using the word/phrase. This will help you think more deeply about the meaning and make a personal connection about how to use it.

As mentioned above, these conversations are real and unscripted, so you may find that the pace is a bit too fast to catch as much as you would like. Note that if you listen to the audio from a Podcast app, you should have the option to slow down the speed 50%. You might find it helpful to listen one time at a slower speed, and then again at natural speed.

At the end of each of the show notes, you will find some discussion questions under the section "Join the Conversation." If you are using this resource on your own and do not have an opportunity to discuss the questions with another person, these questions can be perfect for journal writing practice. Writing can be an excellent way to help build your English skills because it gives you the time to search for words that you might not normally use. You may even find that in order to express your idea, you need to use a word that you do not know, so you will have to look it up. Studies have shown that writing things down helps people remember them better, so this can be an excellent tool for learning another language!

We hope you enjoy the conversations and that you will find them helpful for increasing your vocabulary!

Happy learning!