

SPEAK ENGLISH NOW PODCAST

009: Certificates

Hi, Everyone! I'm Georgiana, founder of SpeakEnglishPodcast.com. My mission is to help YOU speak English fluently.

In this episode:

- I will discuss about certificates and real progress in learning English.
- After that, you can practice your speaking with a Question & Answer story.

Ok, let's get started!

As you may know, certificates in English are something important. For example, everybody knows about the Cambridge University Certificates. The First Certificate is probably the most famous one.

If you prefer American English, you have the TOFL certificate, which is also quite popular.

You'd be amazed about how many students prepare themselves to get one of these certificates.

The problem here is people tend to confuse having a certificate with the real level of English they actually have.

For example, for someone who has gotten the First Certificate... Can you be totally sure that this person can speak fluently?

According to the advertising...of course! That's what you have paid for, and that's why you have spent so many hours doing all kinds of boring exercises.

Some students, after studying very hard, travel to England or The United States to practice. Do you know what often happens? It's dramatic: They can barely understand the native speakers. They say they speak too fast, or that they use casual expressions, etc.

So, why does that happen?

Here's the thing. When you prepare for exams you train yourself for the specific exercises you find in those exams. However, when you find yourself in a real conversation, it's totally different. You don't have time to think or translate. It's a completely different experience. You can't stop a conversation for a few seconds just to think about the meaning and what to say next.

Certificates don't prove the level of the language. It just proves that you've been able to pass an exam.

Let me tell you something. Native speakers can speak English without any effort. They have zero problems having a conversation. They know a lot of vocabulary. However, many natives wouldn't pass an advanced English exam.

On the other hand, there are many English students with advanced certificates who are not fluent in English. Believe me. I've had students like that.

See what I mean?

Ok, so I'm not saying that certificates are worthless. I fully respect students who have them. It's a lot of work, and certificates are really useful for getting better jobs, for example.

I am just pointing out that certificates are not the best way to measure progress, and if you really want to improve your level of English, you just need to do two things: Listening and reading. Of course, you also need to practice, but this practice makes sense when you listen and read a lot. This practice is speaking and reading.

MINI-STORY

Ok, let's move on to the next section.

Here, I will use the Question & Answer technique. This is the perfect lesson for automatizing your spoken English. This is how it works:

- I will give you some information. (A phrase or two).
- I will ask simple questions.
- After each question, there will be some seconds of silence: it's your turn to answer the question! Just try to give an easy and short answer, not a complex one.
- After you answer, I will give you a correct answer.

This process will continue and little by little; I'll be telling a story using questions and answers.

Ok, let's start!

Ted studied very hard and got all the English certificates.

Did Ted study hard?

Yes, he studied hard. He studied English very hard.

How did Ted study?

Hard. He studied hard.

What did Ted study? French? German?

Neither French nor German. He didn't study any of those languages. He studied English. In fact, He got all the English certificates.

Did Ted get only one English certificate?

No, no. He didn't get only one certificate. He got all the certificates. All of them.

Who got all the English certificates?

Ted. Ted got them. He studied very hard, and he got all of them.

Ted wanted to practice his English, so he traveled to England.

Did Ted want to practice his English or his Japanese?

His English. Ted wanted to practice his English.

What language did he want to practice?

English. He wanted to practice English.

Who wanted to practice English?

Ted. Ted wanted to practice English.

What language did he want to practice?

English. English was the language he wanted to practice. He traveled to England to practice.

Did he travel to The United States?

No, no. He didn't travel to The United States. He traveled to England.

Did he travel to France?

No, neither. He didn't travel to The United States nor France. He traveled to England.

Why did he travel to England?

Because he wanted to practice English. He traveled there to practice his English.

Where did he travel?

To England. He traveled to England.

In England, Ted couldn't understand a word. It was too difficult.

Could he understand something in England?

No, he couldn't. He couldn't understand a word.

Could he understand two words in English?

No. He couldn't. Ted traveled to England, but he couldn't understand a single word.

Who couldn't understand a word in England? Eliza?

No, no. Not Eliza. It was Ted who couldn't understand a word in England. It was too difficult.

Was it too difficult or too easy?

Too difficult. It was too difficult. The English from England was too difficult.

What was too difficult?

The English from England. It was too difficult for Ted.

For whom was the English from England too difficult?
For Ted. It was too difficult for Ted.

Ted changed his approach and decided to listen to 3 hours of English every day.

Did Ted change something?

Yes. He changed his approach. He changed the way he was learning English.

Did Ted change the way he was studying English?

Yes. He changed that. He wanted to do something different. He decided to listen to 3 hours of English every day.

How many hours did Ted decide to listen to?

Two hours. He decided to listen two hours every day.

Did he decide to listen every day or every week?

Every day. He decided to listen every day.

After six months, he returned to England, and he met a charming English girl.

Did Ted return to England?

Yes. He returned to England.

Did he return after one year?

No. He didn't return after one year. He returned after six months.

Where did he return?

England. He returned to England. He met a girl there.

Did Ted meet someone in England?

Yes. He met a very charming girl in England.

Did Ted meet a guy?

No, no. He didn't meet a guy. He met a girl.

Was the girl charming?

Yes, she was. She was charming. She was a charming English girl.

Ok, this is the end of this short lesson. Can you imagine the situation? Ted became very frustrated the first time he went to England because he couldn't speak or understand. However, after

changing his approach by listening every day, he improved his English. So, the second time he went to England, he met a charming girl. Maybe, she became his girlfriend. We don't know.

As you can see, you're answering easy questions all the time. They are easy on purpose, and this technique helps you to develop your speaking skills. It's like practicing with another person!

This is one of the techniques that I use in my courses. I recommend you to take a look at:

Courses.SpeakEnglishPodcast.com

Ok, this is the end of this episode. Remember to listen to it at least one more time. It will help you with your English.

See you next week and have a wonderful day!

Bye! Bye!

