

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

Thank you for purchasing Stateside Sounds, A Subscription to Better English. Our goal is to help you improve your fluency in English. In other words, we want to help you 1) understand what you hear and 2) speak naturally and correctly on a wide variety of subjects. Your subscription to Stateside Sounds will help you do this if you will follow the suggestions provided below!

STAGE I. PLAN

1. Establish a time each day (at least 20-30 minutes) that you are going to review Stateside Sounds and other English materials. You will benefit much more studying 20 minutes per day than from studying two hours on just one day of the week.
2. Set one or two daily and weekly goals that you can accomplish. For example... “By next Monday I will complete Stages II and III for Dialogue #5.”

STAGE II. UNDERSTAND

1. Listen to several of the dialogues to see what you understand and to identify dialogues that are of interest to you. Do not worry if you do not understand very much! Just relax and enjoy listening for meaning.
2. Choose one of the dialogues that is of interest and listen to it several times, each time attempting to understand a little bit more.
3. If a slow version¹ of the dialogue is available, listen to it several times. Now listen to the normal speed dialogue again. You will find that you understand perhaps 10-15% more.
4. Listen to the slow version of the dialogue while reading along in the transcript. Now listen to the normal speed version while reading along in the transcript. Study the text and the footnotes to make sure that you understand the meaning of each phrase.
5. Listen to the normal speed dialogue again several times (without the transcript) until you hear and understand each word and phrase. [Repeat steps 4 and 5 until you feel that you understand the dialogue completely.]

RECAP OF METHODOLOGY

Plan

- Establish study time; set daily/weekly goals

Understand

- Listen to fast (normal) version; listen to slow version; listen to fast version again
- Listen and read at same time; use notes
- Listen to fast version without reading; repeat steps until you understand

Expand

- Mimic native speakers (say what they say)
- Answer questions (stop the CD to respond)
- Practice Useful Phrases and Flash Cards
- Role play (take the part of a speaker)
- Discuss subject with a friend

STAGE III. EXPAND

1. **Mimic.** Using the dialogue that you now understand, practice “mimicking” the speakers in the conversation. This is repeating word for word (out loud!) everything that each speaker says. When you first start to do this, you might need to pause the dialogue after each speaker so that you time to repeat what you have heard. Listen closely to the speaker’s pronunciation, tone, and rhythm. Try to say each phrase just as the native speaker says it. Don’t forget to speak out loud. [Note: if you have a tape recorder or computer with a microphone, you might

¹ TIP: If you are listening on a computer using Windows Media Player you can change the speed of any dialogue (faster or slower) by clicking “View,” then “Enhancements,” then “Play Speed Settings.”

find it helpful to record your “mimicking” to compare your pronunciation and tone with that of the native speakers.]

2. **Respond.** a) Answer the questions on the Listening Comprehension track for the dialogue you selected. Stop the CD after each question and give your answer using a complete sentence. Try to give as much detail as possible in your answer. After listening to the sample answers provided, you might want to answer the questions again. Speak out loud.

b) Repeat the Useful Phrases for the dialogue until they feel comfortable. Speak out loud.

c) Practice your pronunciation and learning of the Flash Card phrases by repeating slowly and quickly after the native speakers. Cut out the card (from the sheet provided) for the dialogue you are studying and carry it with you to memorize the four phrases listed.

3. **Role Play.** a) *Take the part of one of the speakers in the dialogue.* For example, you might choose the part of “Mary” in a conversation between “John” and “Mary.” After each one of John’s parts, stop the dialogue and say Mary’s part out loud. Don’t worry if you change the words or forget exactly what Mary said. Try to give a complete response based on what you remember and what makes sense for the dialogue. Then turn on the conversation and listen to Mary’s part. Continue this until you have completed the full dialogue. Repeat as often as you like and don’t forget to speak out loud.

b) *Take all the parts in the dialogue!* This means that you will turn off the CD/MP3 and say the entire dialogue on your own out loud. [Yes, this means that you are holding a conversation with yourself!] Don’t try to repeat the dialogue word for word; instead, use what you have learned to cover all the major points. *Now you are really talking!*

4. **Find a Friend.** Find a conversation partner and discuss the subject you have learned about in the dialogue. This can be a friend who is learning English or a native speaker with whom you have regular contact. The key is to use what you have learned in “real life” situations as soon as possible.

At this point you should feel very comfortable with your ability to speak about the dialogue and actively use the most important words and phrases. Well done! **Now you are ready to go back to Step 2 of Stage II and focus on a different dialogue.** It is unlikely that you will complete Stages II and III for all of the dialogues in each edition, but if you will follow these steps for at least half of the dialogues, you will see excellent progress in your English.

A few final thoughts...

People learn differently so feel free to spend the most time on the steps outlined above that seem to help you the most. Research shows that people who are willing to try to use the language (even if they make many mistakes) learn much faster than people who do not open their mouth until they know they can say something exactly right. So relax, “swallow your pride,” and open your mouth as often as you can!

Lastly, even if your primary objective in learning English is related to business, improving your English will allow you to experience both the satisfaction of pushing yourself intellectually and the joy of building close personal relationships. So keep up the good work—it’s worth it!

Best regards,

J. Tyler Rollins
President
Stateside Sounds, Inc.