

# 10 WAYS TO EXPLORE YOUR ENGLISH IN LONDON!

At Stafford House we encourage our students to be active participants in this language journey. We are always impressed by our students; they work so hard to improve their English skills when they are with us. Often students ask us how they can improve their English outside of the classroom. We offer the following advice and would like to share some tips with you:



**1. Speak English at all times!** Try to make friends with students from other nationalities. This is easy at Stafford House London as we never have fewer than 30 nationalities studying with us. In 2014 and 2015 we never had more than 16% of any nationality studying with us, so speaking English around the school is the only way to communicate with your classmates.

**2. Watch lots of television;** try to follow a British drama. Some of these have been running for over 50 years. They are easy to follow and often very entertaining. When in the UK, you can watch programmes on catch up TV on the internet for free (using BBC iPlayer for example). You can add subtitles and pause and rewind any sections you didn't understand the first time. This is a fantastic way to improve your listening and vocabulary. Your teachers and the student services team can give you tips on which programmes to watch.



**3. Keep a diary of your stay in the UK.** One day you will reread this and have many fond memories. Just a few lines every day, practising putting your experiences into words, will make an enormous improvement to your ability to express yourself. Keep it private or ask your teacher to help correct your writing and improve it!

**4.** Perhaps the most important advice is to **meet British people other than your teachers!** Make friends with your homestay family, use the time over dinner to really get to know them. If you are staying in a residence or student house, search for language exchange evenings- there are many in London where Londoners will exchange an hour of conversation in English for an hour of conversation in your language.

**5. Join a local club, either continue a hobby from your own country or start a new one!** Meeting people who share your beliefs and interests is easy, from sports clubs, music and art appreciation groups, to religious meetings and festivities or even cookery clubs- there are so many ways to meet like-minded people and communicate in English. The staff at the school can help you get started.





**6. Make friends in English on social media.** Set up an English language twitter account, friend your classmates on Facebook, get involved in reviewing communities like TripAdvisor or Yelp! All this communication in English will help you learn all the new abbreviations and buzzwords that maybe even your teachers are only just learning!

**7. Read in English!** Sounds boring right? But studies show that students who read regularly improve their English much more quickly, and retain their English vocabulary for much longer. In London, there is a free morning paper called the Metro, and a free evening paper called the Evening Standard. Perfect for that underground journey to school and back every day. If that wasn't enough, there also free magazines given out at underground stations nearly every day. There's no excuse not to read something every day! The best advice we can give is that you don't need to read books or long articles (although it's great if you do!). Just read a short article (200 words is enough) every day and try to really understand it and your vocabulary and reading speed will improve even more quickly!

**8. Be curious!** Every day you will see signs and advertisements as you travel around the city. Not sure what a word or sentence means? Google it! Or write it down (take a picture!) and ask your teacher. Learners who question everything learn more quickly and understand more deeply, so don't stop asking questions! Our teachers and staff are happy to help with any questions, we love curious learners!



**9. There's an app for that!** Literally, there is an app for everything! Find one in English that does what you need. Whether it's mapping your outdoor sports activity (e.g. Map My Fitness) or understanding Rap Lyrics (e.g. Genius), Reading restaurant reviews (e.g. Open Table) or keeping up with your favourite football team (e.g. Arseblog or Stretty News) there is always some way for you to interact with what you love, in English, on your smartphone or tablet. First things first, change your smartphone's language settings to "English"!!!

**10. Listen to podcasts.** There are books, history programmes, comedy shows, news channels, sports discussion shows and language learning podcasts all available for free to download to your phone or tablet. Get involved! The more you listen in English, the more your listening skills will improve. Ask your teachers for what to listen to, they are always here to help!

**We wish you best of luck on your language journey!**

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