



We can't
learn a
language
in a day.
Or a week!

Give English Time

Learning English is a long process. It can take up to six-hundred hours to reach the advanced stage. Therefore, embark on the journey only when you have enough time to cover at least one level. There are no magical systems but if you study with a good method and teacher you will definitely learn.

As a teacher, I have come across hundreds of students who have joined English lessons for very short periods. When I explained this was not a good idea many replied that "A little is better than nothing". In fact it is not. If you study for too short a time whatever you learn will be easily forgotten. You will have wasted your time and your money.

Traditionally there are six levels in English and it takes about one hundred hours to complete each one. They are beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper intermediate and advanced. However, nowadays most schools ascribe to the European level definitions which more or less follow the same criteria as above but with different

names: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. Again, my advice is for you to complete every one of these cycles and take a break only at the end of each course.

As you saw, I have written that each level takes approximately one hundred hours. If you can only manage twenty or even thirty because you're too busy, my advice is for you to wait until better times. What you learn will not have enough substance and you'll forget it soon. Again, hours and money wasted!

What's the minimum? I would doubt whether to follow general English courses that had less than forty hours and discard anything below thirty. Exceptions? Programmes on specific skills, such as answering the phone, writing a CV, preparing a presentation or speaking at meetings. Sometimes there just isn't enough material for longer courses!

Embark: board.
Ascribe: follow.
Break: pause.
Substance: material.
Whether: if.
Halfway: in the middle.

Common errors? Not dedicating enough time (yes, one hour a week is not sufficient unless supplemented with lots of work at home); expecting to speak the language after a few lessons; joining a group with too many students or with people of different levels; giving up because you can't see instant results.

The right attitude? Set yearly goals and check whether you've met them; dedicate double time to homework than to classes; change teachers when you are dissatisfied; take a year off if you need a break—but do not abandon courses halfway because if you do you'll have to start at the same level again. Rome wasn't built in a day. Or a week!



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