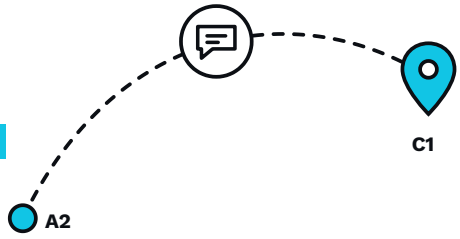
SPEAKING TOPICS · TEMAS DE CONVERSACIÓN · A2 → C1

Learning English



Words, phrases and questions to talk about learning languages — the topic every examiner loves.

Todo lo que necesitas para hablar de cómo aprendes inglés, ordenado por nivel del Marco Común Europeo (MCER).

1. **Find your level.** Start with your column, then try the next one.
2. **Say it out loud.** Read every example sentence aloud — twice.
3. **Make it yours.** Answer the questions on page 3 about **your** life.

1 Vocabulary by level

Vocabulario por nivel

A2 Elementary	B1 Intermediate	B2 Upper-int.	C1 Advanced
word palabra	**pronunciation** pronunciación	**fluency** fluidez	**proficiency** dominio
dictionary diccionario	**vocabulary** vocabulario	**language barrier** barrera lingüística	**collocation** colocación
mistake error	**accent** acento	**intonation** entonación	**nuance** matiz
practise practicar	**native speaker** hablante nativo	**immersion** inmersión	**idiomatic** idiomático
grammar gramática	**fluent** con fluidez	**rusty** oxidado	**lexical range** riqueza léxica
lesson clase	**improve** mejorar	**word-for-word** literal	**plateau** estancamiento
language idioma	**revise** repasar	**mother tongue** lengua materna	**linguistic** lingüístico
speak / talk hablar	**bilingual** bilingüe	**self-taught** autodidacta	**articulate** que se expresa bien

2 Phrasal verbs in action

Phrasal verbs con ejemplos

look up A2
find a word in a dictionary
I **look up** new words on my phone.

pick up B1
learn without studying
I **picked up** some Italian on holiday.

go over B1
review
Let's **go over** the irregular verbs.

keep up with B2
not fall behind
It's hard to **keep up with** native speakers.

brush up on B2
improve a skill you used to have
I need to **brush up on** my English before the trip.

catch on B2
understand
She **caught on** very quickly.

figure out B2
understand after thinking
I can usually **figure out** the meaning from context.

jot down C1
write something quickly
I **jot down** useful phrases in my notebook.

3 Learn, teach or study?

Aprender ≠ enseñar

GET KNOWLEDGE

learn

You **get** a skill or knowledge. "Aprender".

> **I'm learning English with a native teacher.**

GIVE KNOWLEDGE

teach

You **give** knowledge to someone. "Enseñar".

> **She teaches me grammar. (not "learns me")**

MAKE AN EFFORT

study

You spend time with books, notes or courses.

> **I study for an hour every evening.**

4 Idioms & expressions

Para sonar como un nativo

practice makes perfect B1
the more you practise, the better you get
Keep speaking — practice makes perfect.

break the ice B2
start a conversation with strangers
We played a game to break the ice.

Rome wasn't built in a day B2
important things take time
Don't give up — Rome wasn't built in a day.

get your tongue around C1
manage to pronounce
I can't get my tongue around "thoroughly".

a steep learning curve C1
a lot to learn quickly
Moving to London was a steep learning curve.

a piece of cake B1
very easy
The listening was a piece of cake.

hit the books B2
study hard
I have to hit the books this weekend.

in the same boat B2
in the same situation
We're all in the same boat — nobody's perfect.

lost in translation C1
meaning is lost when translated
Some jokes get lost in translation.

step out of your comfort zone C1
do something difficult or new
Speaking in class takes you out of your comfort zone.

5 Spanish speakers' traps

Errores típicos

✗ ~~I have learned English during 5 years.~~
✓ **I've been learning English for 5 years.**
duration = **for**

✗ ~~I don't remember the word.~~
✓ **I can't remember the word.**
can't remember

✗ ~~I want to improve my level of English.~~
✓ **I want to improve my English.**
simpler is better

✗ ~~My teacher learns me grammar.~~
✓ **My teacher teaches me grammar.**
enseñar = **teach**

✗ ~~Can you repeat? I didn't listen.~~
✓ **Sorry, I didn't catch that.**
didn't **hear / catch**

✗ ~~I'm doing a lot of mistakes.~~
✓ **I'm making a lot of mistakes.**
make a mistake

6 Quick check

¿Lo has pillado?

1. I'm making / doing a lot of mistakes.
2. Can you teach / learn me this?
3. I've been learning for / since six years.
4. I need to brush up on / brush off my grammar.
5. The test was a piece of cake / bread.
6. Sorry, I didn't catch / listen that.

Answers: 1 making · 2 teach · 3 for · 4 brush up on · 5 cake · 6 catch

7 Questions for your level

Practica en voz alta

A2 Cambridge A2 Key style

1. How long have you studied English?
2. Why are you learning English?
3. What do you find easy or difficult?
4. Do you watch films in English?

B1 Cambridge B1 Preliminary style

1. What is the best way to learn new words?
2. Tell me about a good teacher you've had.
3. Would you like to live in an English-speaking country? Why?

B2 Cambridge B2 First style

1. What's the most difficult thing about English for Spanish speakers?
2. Is it possible to become fluent without living abroad?
3. How do you keep motivated when you feel you're not improving?

C1 Cambridge C1 Advanced style · discussion

1. Should English be taught from the age of three?
2. Will AI translation make learning languages unnecessary?
3. What does it really mean to "know" a language?

8 Level up your answer

Sube de nivel

"Why are you learning English?"

A2	I **need** English for my job. And I like **travelling**.	need / like + -ing.
B1	Mainly for work. I **have to** write emails in English, and I'd also **like to** travel without any problems.	have to / would like to.
B2	**To be honest**, I need a B2 for a promotion. But I've also realised it **opens a lot of doors** — I want to **keep up with** my colleagues.	Discourse marker + idiom + phrasal verb.
C1	**It started out** as a requirement for my degree, but it's become **much more than that**. I love **picking up on** the nuances of the language.	Narrative of change + precise phrasal verb.

9 Keep talking

Frases para alargar tu respuesta

Your method

What works for me is...
I try to ... every day.
The best tip I've had is...

Difficulties

I really struggle with...
What I find hardest is...
I always get ... mixed up.

Goals

My goal is to...
By next summer I'd like to...
I'm aiming for...

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