

Learning Ourselves

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Abstract

Self-learning comes from a personal desire to gain knowledge which paves way to success. If we learn to find more information about a topic, and it is used for a particular purpose it is enjoyable, leading to good results. Self-learning must occur naturally and it happens out of curiosity. If one is motivated to learn oneself rather than outside sources there is a possibility of acquiring knowledge. Among many mode of learning such as you tube tutorials, webinars, books, we can choose one that suits best for us and most engaging. Though it is challenging, it requires lots of discipline. If we get ready to learn, have clear learning goals, ability to decide which tools are best for us, clear idea of deciding to the suitable assessment, Self-learning enables us to learn what we want and tends to be more effective than instructional learning.

Keywords: Learning Ourselves, Four Skills, Idioms, Idioms in Sentences

If we are confident, we can skip all expensive English courses and huge text books and try to learn things in our own way. Many of us feel hesitant about studying alone. But if we step forward to learn ourselves, it is an easy task and so on realise that all these sources can be found at home. The truth is our interest is not only the best source in learning English but it is the easiest way to learn exercise at home any time we want. After finding all the resources we need, we can take with us and study where we want. When we start studying ourselves, there will not be any obstacles for us to prove that we can learn ourselves. If there is consistent effort, success is very near and we can reach the peak easily.

By listening to English songs, watching English videos of our interest, watching English movies and TV songs, testing our grammar with online English quizzes, chatting with friends in WhatsApp, reading e-books, articles and online magazines, writing about something, thinking about and speaking English whenever we go, we can always make ourselves motivated, encouraged and support ourselves in learning journey. Sometimes learning ourselves can be a challenge, but it is possible. We can improve our reading, writing listening and speaking skills even though we are alone by adopting various techniques. Whether it be grammar or vocabulary, memorization helps us though it is hard and boring. Shivali Nayak and Allison Chan quotes the tips of Virginia Lang, an Australian English teacher "Get post-it notes and label everything in your house. Every time you associate that object with the word, you're more likely to remember it" (abc.net.au/e)

To develop our reading skill, we can connect reading with our passion. If our passion is sports, let us read a sports magazine. Highlighting the new words and having a good online dictionary or a good paper dictionary, We can check the definition and put it in memory. By starting an online blog or journal, we can improve our Writing Skill. We can start with a small writing tasks such as captions, we can move onto sentences and paragraph. It's better to change

the default language settings on our devices and apps to English as it forces us to think in English all the time.

By keeping a very good eye contact, paying attention to nonverbal signs such as body language and tone making, a mental image of what the speaker is saying by empathizing with the speaker, we can improve our Listening Skills. To develop our Speaking Skills, we have to listen, imitate, read, reflect, prepare, speak and practice continuously. Working on the pronunciation and diction, talking with ourselves in the mirror, listening attentively to the native speakers, reading books aloud, using language learning apps and participation in public speaking events, definitely will help us to communicate effectively.

After master in all four skills, next step is to standardise our communication, by expertising in the usage of vocabulary, sentence construction, grammars etc., "Planning makes things perfect and go right." So we should have a study plan. As study plan helps to measure our progress, forces to set goals and motivating, planning is essential. Before making plan, we have to consider our goals, learning style, timeline, availability of learning resources etc., After planning, building the outline for the study plan is important. It involves breaking our goal into smaller steps, setting time line and setting a check –point to measure our success. Next comes organizing the content in our study plan like priorities, the learning step picking up the strategies and resources, incorporating extra study tricks etc., concentrating on making our learning easy and to boost up our interest. For that study environment should be setup. There are different types of texts, recordings and video with interactive exercises and worksheets to practice the skills we need.

In the process of standardising our communication and finding a new way to express ourselves Idioms occupies foremost place. An idiom is a phrase or saying, which are commonly used in every day dialogues to express certain ideas or opinions. Understanding idioms require a deeper familiarity of the English language to comprehend what someone means which it is used in conversation. Idioms can help us express ourselves in a more creative way, boost our conversation skills and can help us feel more

comfortable and confident with our conversational abilities. It also helps us add extra flavour to take our language next level. Understanding the English is basics of English but Idioms help us explore the language in a deeper and more meaningful way.

Let us see how to learn idioms and phrases ourselves. We may little wet behind the ears when it comes in learning Idioms. We may need a great idioms unit without breaking the bank. We may bark up the wrong tree trying to find fun idiom activities. But we can make cats out of the bag. Here are some activities to learn idioms a piece of cake.

Exercise No.1

Mere translating Idioms into other languages can be challenging because the original meanings may be lost. Idiomatic expressions are difficult to understand particularly in the case of non-native speakers. Due to this characteristics, we have to familiarise many Idioms with their meaning and its usage in context. Here are some examples.

A Hot Potato

Meaning: a controversial issue or situation that is awkward to run pleasant to deal with.

Example: He seems to have landed himself with something of a hot potato today.

Piece of Cake

Meaning: Something that is easy to do.

Example: The students found the project to be a piece of cake because it was incredibly easy.

Once in a Blue Moon

Meaning: Very Rarely

Example : I'm very careful about what I eat so it's only once in a blue moon I eat fast food.

A Bed of Roses

Meaning: an effortless, happy situation.

Example: How can you make your life a bed of roses without working very hard?

Raining Cats and Dogs

Meaning: raining very heavily.

Example: Don't forget to take your umbrella. It's raining cats and dogs out there.

When Pigs Fly

Meaning: Something that will never happen or is impossible.

Example: He plans to clean his house every week, but he will probably do it only when pigs fly.

Civil Advocate

Meaning: one who presents a counter argument.

Example: The teacher often played devil's advocate with his students. So that they could have an interesting discussion and look at other points of views.

Miss the Boat

Meaning: Miss the chance.

Example: There are too many students waiting to grab an opportunity like this, if you don't act fast, you are going to miss the boat.

Apple of Eye

Meaning: Someone very precious or dear.

Example: The dog is the apple of their eye because it gives them a lot of love.

Zip your Lip

Meaning: to stop talking

Example: I just zipped my lip as I was too scared to do anything about it.

A Leopard Can't Change His Spots.

Meaning: One cannot change who they are.

Example: He keeps saying he is sorry for coming late but repeating it again and again. I guess a leopard can't change its spots.

Repeating it for many times by reading and using it in various contexts we can fix it in our mind and use it whenever we need.

Exercise No.2

Here are some idioms for giving advice. Let us match the picture with their corresponding sentences which suits the picture, then with the idioms.

MORE IDIOMS

Match the idioms with their meaning (write the numbers)

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. You should take a side in the argument. |  <i>You hit the nail on the head!</i> |
| 2. Why don't you speak? |  <i>Has the cat got your tongue?</i> |
| 3. It was quite unexpected. |  <i>I got it straight from the horse's mouth.</i> |
| 4. You can't have two good things at the same time. |  <i>The early bird catches the worm.</i> |
| 5. You are always attentive and quick to take action. |  <i>Stop sitting on the fence!</i> |
| 6. You said exactly the right thing. |  <i>You can't have your cake and eat it too!</i> |
| 7. You'll have an advantage if you do something immediately. |  <i>It happened out of the blue!</i> |
| 8. I heard it from a reliable source. |  <i>You are always on the ball!</i> |

liveworksheets.com

Source: www.liveworksheets.com.

- Don't put all your eggs in one basket.
- Hold your horses.
- Don't burn the candle at both sides.
- Don't cry over spilt milk.
- Don't spill the beans.
- Don't open a can of worms.
- Sleep on it.
- Don't dig your own grave.

Guess the idiom, which matches the meaning

1. Be patient, stop and consider your actions.
2. Don't work too hard.
3. Don't create a problematic situation.
4. Don't reveal the secret.
5. Don't do something stupid that will hurt you later.
6. Don't depend on a single person or plan.
7. Don't regret something that can't be changed.
8. Take your time before making an important decision.

Exercise No. 3

Idiom Hunt

After understanding the concept of Idioms and having had some practice in recognizing them and their meanings, we can look for idioms used in various occasions. For example, we can find some idioms used for expressing our sadness such as

1. Down in the mouth (to look unhappy).
2. Down in the dumps (dull mood).
3. Reduce to tears (make some cry)
4. Lump in your throat (get a feeling in dry throaton, about to cry).
5. Face like a wet weekend (sad ordepressed).

Idioms in Sentences

1. Sheis not able to get distinction so she seems to bed own in the mouth.
2. John seems to bed own in the dumps because his grand father expired lastweek.
3. My father reduced me to tears with his sharp words today.
4. That film's climax was so emotional that I lumped my throat.
5. Radha's face is like a wet weekend. I guess something is wrong with her.

Exercise No.4

When we come across idioms in stories, we can relate it to some situations and so it is very easy to understand and memories. As stories are entertaining and enlightening and provide exposure to how each idiom can be used in avariety of context.

Example

My Successful Friend

My friend Doug has really done well for himself in life. I'm very proud of him and all of his achievements! We get together every year or so for a two or three-day hike in Oregon. It's a great time to reflect on how life is going, talk about old times and have new adventures. Let me tell you a little bit about Doug.

It was clear from the beginning that he was going places. He did very well in school, and everyone knew he was a smart cookie. Not only were his grades good, but he was also an outstanding athlete, as well as keeping his nose clean. Some accused him of being squeaky clean, but that didn't bother him. He wasn't going to let anyone rain on his parade!

After he graduated from college, he decided to go to New York. As the song goes: "If you can make it there, you can make it anywhere!" Back in those days, New York was a hotbed of innovation. Doug was a product design specialist and had some great

designs on tap. Unfortunately, he didn't immediately succeed. Things weren't easy in the beginning, and it took him a while to learn the ins and outs of the Big Apple. In any case, it soon became clear to him that he needed to make some brownie points with his director. He decided he would volunteer to create a presentation for a new product at the company's yearly dog and pony show.

The boss wasn't so sure, but the decision about who would make the presentation wasn't carved in stone. In the end, the manager decided that Doug would do a good job. Doug gladly accepted the challenge and decided to make quite an impression. He wasn't exactly going to reinvent the wheel, but he knew he could improve on past presentations. He felt that giving a great presentation would improve his standing in the company.

The day of the presentation arrived, and, no surprise, Doug did an outstanding job. His presentation was informative, and he didn't blow any smoke. Where there were problems, he pointed them out and made suggestions as to how to improve the situation. Long story short, because of his excellent presentation the director realized that he was a genuine article. Doug started taking more and more responsibility at the company. Within three years, he had sealed the deal on the development of two of his best ideas. As they say, the rest is history.

Idioms Used in the Story

1. be on a roll = to have one success after another has a string of successes
2. Big Apple = New York New York
3. blow smoke = to fake or provide false information in order to gain something
4. brownie points = extra goodwill
5. carved in stone = not changeable
6. dog and pony show = a presentation during which a company's best products are shown
7. genuine article = real true not fake
8. go places = to become successful
9. hotbed of something = an area that is famous for a certain type of industry or success
10. ins and outs = the details and inside information about a place or situation
11. keep one's nose clean = to not make any illegal or unethical mistakes

12. on tap = ready
 13. rain on someone's parade = to criticize the success of someone
 14. reinvent the wheel = to remake or invent something that already exists
 15. seal the deal = to make an agreement sign a contract
 16. smart cookie = very intelligent person
 17. squeaky clean = without fault not having problems or mistakes
- (Source: Thoughtco.com)

It's a story about a successful Friend who had a fantastic career. On the first reading, we should try to understand the gist without using the idiom definitions. On the second reading, we must try to understand the text using the definitions of the idioms. Finally, we must try to use the idioms in our sentences.

Idioms in Sentence Beonaroll

Learning Idioms from Pictures

As English is our second language, we may not be familiar with many basic vocabulary. For example in the idiom "Leave someone at alter", some may not know the meaning of the word 'alter'. Taking look at the picture, seeing a picture of someone sitting with depression in an alter makes the vocabulary easy to know without having to find the words in the dictionary. Then, it's much easier to remember this idiom because we can associate an image with the definition. Visualising idioms makes memorizing easier. Examine these pictures given below.

Exercise No.5

We can learn it as a pair or in a group joining with our friends. After creating a list of ten idioms, after knowing their meaning, each pair has to take one idiom and act it out. Other pairs must try to guess the idiom. Points can be given to the pairs, who guess the idiom correctly. In turn, each pair of students act out their idiom for the other pairs. This is a way to receive the idioms with fun. Moreover we must tend to remember them more easily as we are relating it to a visual action.

Idioms to be worked with

- to cry over spilt milk
- to put your foot in your mouth
- to let the cat out of the bag
- to see eye to eye
- to judge a book by its cover

Exercise No. 6

Let us place some Idioms in one side and the meaning of the Idioms another side. We must divide into two groups, one group must take idioms and other groups must take its meaning. One must take the role of a Co-ordinator. Now we have to mingle and the one who is having the idiom must find the other student who is having the meaning of his/her idiom.

Exercise No. 7

After organizing ourselves in small groups of 3 or 4, let us take an idiom such as 'On cloud Nine' and work together to put this idiom in to an 'asking for advice' letter. For example we can write a letter like this.

Dear Aunt,

My grand father is so happy at the moment because everything in our family is going on well. She is on cloud nine as I used to spend most of the evening time with her. Unfortunately,

I have to move to the states regarding my project work. How can I tell this to her?

Now this letter should be passed to the other group to write a response using another idiom such as

Dear John

It's always very sad when the older one has to be away from their loved ones. I can understand why you want to tip toe around the situation as this is difficult for your grand mothers to send you to the states. If you explain the situation to her definitely she will understand and support you.

Students with vivid imagination with come up with very creative situation and advice can try with these idioms

1. Don't bite off more than you can chew Meaning – Don't be over ambitious.

2. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
Meaning – be happy with what you have.
3. Don't add fuel to the fire.
4. Meaning – don't do or say something to make an agreement, problem or bad situation worse.
5. Rome was n't built in a day.
6. Meaning – be patient it takes time to accomplish a complex task or create some thing great.
7. Action speak louder than words.
8. Meaning – what you do is more significant than what you say.

After attempting those exercises everyone can understand that Self-Learning allows students to gain independence and the ability to progress without relying on a teacher, and it has a vital ability to develop themselves. When students try to figure out an answer or solve a problem on their own, it gives satisfaction and helps to reinforce information. In the process of self-assessment, editing on a frequent basis they feel comfortable. Moreover it lends opportunity for learning at their own pace, developing ownership, clearing learning insights, increasing awareness, curiosity to learn more, developing self-taught and creating stress-free learning environment.

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