

English Study Guide for Intermediate Learners

The Art of Conversation



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Your English Study Guide

Intermediate Conversational English

This study guide was made with the purpose of helping intermediate English learners decide what parts of the English language they should focus on while improving their spoken English skills. It has been divided into four categories: grammar, vocabulary, everyday English, and pronunciation. I provided my own examples in each category, but I've also provided additional resources for further independent study. Be sure to check them out!

There is a LOT of information included in this study guide. Do not try to read through it in one sitting. Look at it one section at a time, making sure you fully understand a section before moving to the next one. If you have any questions about any of the information contained in this study guide, please do not hesitate to ask me!

“One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way.”

--Frank Smith

GRAMMAR

Section 1: Regular and Irregular Verbs

Verbs are words that show actions. They can be used in the present tense (to describe what is happening now), the past tense (to describe what happened before), and the future tense (to describe what will happen in the future). There are two forms of verbs: regular and irregular.

With regular verbs, when we want to talk in the present tense, we use the base form of the verb or we add an “s” at the end of the verb, like in the following:

Verb	Present Tense
Play	I play, you play, he plays, she plays, it plays, we play, they play
Jump	I jump, you jump, he jumps, she jumps, it jumps, we jump, they jump

The pronouns “he,” “she,” and “it” use “s” at the end of the verb. When we use the past tense form of regular verbs, we simply add -ed for all pronouns (Examples: He *played* with his dog. They *jumped* into the pool together.).

However, there are several irregular verbs that exist that don’t follow one or both of these patterns. It’s important to learn their forms for both the present and past tenses. Here are some common ones:

Verb	Present Tense	Past Tense
Be	I am, you are, he is, she is, it is, we are, they are	I was, you were, he was, she was, it was, we were, they were
Do	I do, you do, he does, she does, it does, we do, they do	I did, you did, he did, she did, it did, we did, they did
Go	I go, you go, he goes, she goes, it goes, we go, they go	I went, you went, he went, she went, it went, we went, they went
Have	I have, you have, he has, she has, it has, we have, they have	I had, you had, he had, she had, it had, we had, they had
Make	I make, you make, he makes, she makes, it makes, we make, they make	I made, you made, he made, she made, it made, we made, they made

PRONUNCIATION

Section 1: How to Sound Out Letters in the English Alphabet

It might sound straightforward, but it's important to know how each of the letters in the English alphabet sound, especially because several of them have more than one sound. For example, the "a" in "cat" sounds different from the "a" in "ate." We call the "a" in "cat" a short vowel sound while the "a" in "ate" is a long vowel sound (notice that the long vowel sound is the same as the way you would say the letter "a" by itself). Remember that the vowels are "a," "e," "i," "o," and "u." "Y" is also a part of this list sometimes, if it's part of a word that has no other vowel (such as "my"), if it's at the end of a word (such as "candy"), or if it's in the middle of a word (such as "cycle"). These are the three ways "y" sounds like one of the other vowels instead of a "y" sound like in the word "yes."

Consonants, or all of the other letters in the alphabet that aren't vowels, sometimes have more than one sound as well. For example, the "g" in "goat" sounds different from the "g" in "age." We call the "g" in "goat" a hard sound and the "g" in "age" a soft sound. Letters might also change in sound when paired with other letters. I use this chart with students and think it's very helpful in order to learn all of the letter sounds as well as the sound of common letter pairings: <https://qph.fs.quoracdn.net/main-qimg-3271d8acf63361d2e993735218a8876e.webp>.

Here's a link for words with "ough" in particular because there are many different ways those words sound: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/69/87/25/698725ea346598cfb1a83a522b1d1ab8.jpg>.

Section 2: Root, Prefix, and Suffix

Knowing the root, prefix, and suffix of a word also helps to determine how to pronounce a word. A root word is the base form of a word that can have a prefix and/or a suffix added to it. A prefix is something that is placed at the beginning of a word to change its meaning while a suffix is something that is placed at the end of a word to change its meaning. Let's look at some examples!

The word "like" is a root word that means to enjoy something. If I add the prefix "dis" in front, the word becomes "dislike"; "dis" means "opposite of," so "dislike" means the opposite of enjoying something. The word "thank" is a root word that means to show gratitude for something. If I add the suffix "ful" at the end, the word becomes "thankful"; "ful" means "notable for," so "thankful" means expressive of thanks.

Why is this important? If I know how to pronounce the word "like," I can figure out how to pronounce the word "dislike." If I know how to pronounce the word "thank," I can figure out how to pronounce the word "thankful." Knowing how root words are pronounced is really helpful when the root word has a prefix or suffix attached to it.

You can find more information about root words here: <https://7esl.com/root-words/>.

You can access a list of common prefixes and suffixes here: <https://www.myenglishteacher.eu/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/prefixes-and-suffixes.jpeg>.

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