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LIFE IS THE CLASSROOM - IMMERSE YOURSELF

## STRATEGIES: REPEATING >> transcript

**Terry:**

A little birdie told me that today is your birthday!

**Rebecca:**

Awe...how sweet. Thank you!

**Terry:**

You're welcome. Hey, as I was getting you this, I thought about how the "birthday song" uses repetition. This is our topic today. Repeating.

**Rebecca:**

Yes, children's songs often do repeat the same phrases over and over again.

"Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb. Mary had a little lamb whose fleece was white as snow." Repetition helps children learn chunks of language. That's why these songs are so great.

**Terry:**

This works for adults too.

Repetition is a powerful way to learn and remember new language. When you create a memory, a connection is made in your brain. It's like creating a path through a dense forest. The first time you do it, you have to fight your way through. If you don't travel that path again, it will quickly become overgrown. But if you go over it again and again, it becomes a clear and well-used path. It's the same with your memory. The more times you repeat patterns of thought, the easier it is to recall that information. So, repeating is a key part of learning. I'll say it again – repeating is a key part of learning.

**Rebecca:**

So, let's look at different ways to use "repeating" to learn and remember language. First, let's talk about "vocabulary."

It's good to learn vocabulary in groups. Did you know that our brain remembers information best in groups of 5 to 7 items? Keep this in mind when working with new vocabulary. Choose 5-7 new vocabulary words that have a common connection, group them together, and create at least 5 "encounters" with that group. Any time that you hear, read, study or use a new word; you are having an encounter with it. Let's show you how to create 5 encounters with new vocabulary.

Remember the words that we encountered in the last video, from the paragraph that the detective wrote?:

"I interrogated the suspect. Even though she was someone thought to be guilty of a crime, she answered my questions willingly and thoughtfully. However, when I found a problem with her alibi, she became unresponsive. I think she might be the culprit."

So here we have 5 new words – interrogate, suspect, alibi, unresponsive, culprit. This is a great group because these words are connected by a theme (crime investigation).

Let's take these words and show you how to create at least 5 encounters.



**ienglish**

LIFE IS THE CLASSROOM - IMMERSE YOURSELF

## STRATEGIES: **REPEATING** >> transcript

**Terry:**

Well, the first encounter came from reading this passage from the story. When you read something the first time, of course, that is encounter number one.

**Rebecca:**

Encounter #2 happens when you try to guess at the meaning of these unknown words by looking at clues, using the techniques that you learned in our last video.

When you record these words in your notebook, write out their definitions and study them more deeply, this is Encounter #3.

**Terry:**

With the next two encounters, you will have to use those words in your own creative way. This will really help you remember the words.

#4 Write a story or paragraph using the words. Make up your own sentences.

#5 Recombine the words into a totally different story or paragraph.

Let's try it. I'll reuse the 5 words, and then you recombine them to create a different paragraph.

**Rebecca:**

Sounds good. Go ahead.

**Terry:**

Okay. Here it goes:

If you ever become a suspect in a crime investigation, don't be unresponsive when you are interrogated. Make sure you have a strong alibi, assuming that you are not in fact the culprit.

**Rebecca:**

Good job.

**Terry:**

Ok, you try recombining the words and create something different.

**Rebecca:**

Hmm...how about this:

A cookie was missing from the cookie jar. I had 3 suspects. So I lined up my 3 children and interrogated them. "Who took a cookie without asking? Who is the culprit?!" They all just stared at me. They were completely unresponsive. Then suddenly, my 4 year old boy raised his hand and said, "Not me mommy. I have an alibi."



**ienglish**

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## STRATEGIES: **REPEATING** >> transcript

**Terry:**

Wow, what a smart 4 year old! By creating many encounters with new vocabulary, you are using the power of 'repeating.' It helps to form that pathway in your brain. It will be easier to remember those words when you need them.

**Rebecca:**

"Repeating" is a strategy that works with vocabulary; but it can also work with other language skills & features such as listening, reading, writing and pronunciation.

**Terry:**

Let's talk about routine listening.

This is when you listen repeatedly to the same source. For example, listen to the same radio news program every day and watch the daily weather report. If you do this, you will hear familiar vocabulary terms being repeated over and over. These words are connected to a theme. For example, when watching the weather report you will hear words like precipitation, flurries, meteorologist and windchill. With routine listening you are repeating the encounter with familiar terms and language. This is a very helpful listening strategy.

**Rebecca:**

If you can do routine listening, you can also do "routine reading." Read the same newspaper every day. What about magazines? Magazines usually follow themes like "cooking" or "health & fitness." Find a theme and magazine that interests you and read every new edition. You can also do this with books. For example, remember that I've been reading a mystery novel. Well, I love mystery novels and I read as many as I can find. When I do, I see a lot of the same language again and again...words related to the theme of solving a crime.

Remember, repeating is all about creating that strong pathway in your mind, so that when you need to recall the information it comes automatically.

**Terry:**

The more you listen and read, the more you encounter the same language over and over, the better you will know and remember it!

**Rebecca:**

We've talked about routine listening and reading. But "repeating" also happens when you write. Writing is a process.

This process has four stages: Prewriting, Drafting, Revising, and Proofreading.

Prewriting involves planning what you are going to write by gathering ideas and thinking about a focus.

Drafting means writing your ideas in sentences and paragraphs to create your first draft.

Revising means evaluating your rough draft and then rewriting it to make it better.

Proofreading and editing means checking for correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, mechanics and



ienglish

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## STRATEGIES: REPEATING >> transcript

ensuring your final draft is free of errors.

Each step is an encounter with the language that you are writing. This is how repetition is used in the writing process.

We will talk more about the Writing Process in a later video.

### Terry:

Okay, let's move on to using repetition with pronunciation. Pronunciation involves a very physical aspect of learning a language. You have to make movements with your lips, tongue and jaw. In some cases, the muscles in your mouth have to do things they've never done before.

There is only one-way to master a physical skill, whether you're kicking a soccer ball, playing a musical instrument or riding a bicycle - repeating. You have to do it over and over again.

I always say, "do it a thousand times." I remember helping a language student with the "n" sound. She would often replace the "n" sound with "L" - so she would say "good light" instead of "good night" or "low" instead of "no." Then one day, she got it! I helped her realize that the "n" sound was nasal, which means that the air passes through the nose to make the sound. So I had her say, "nnnnnooo." Once she said it, I told her, "Great, now say it a thousand times. If you're children ask you for something, say 'no.' If you husband wants something, say 'no!'".

Practice, practice, practice.

### Rebecca:

Another great technique to help you master pronunciation is "mimicking" or "parroting." It's an exercise in repeating. Have you ever seen a talking parrot? Once, I visited a home with a talking parrot. It just copied the sounds it heard in the house: the doorbell, the phone ringing. And of course, it mimicked people. It talked. It was amazing. It would even call the dog...(whistle) Ariel..bawk..come here Ariel. (whistle)"

Of course, parrots don't really "talk" like humans. They just copy the sounds they hear. And we are more than "parrots." We can think about language. We can understand the rules and express our ideas. But, "parroting" or "mimicking" can be a useful technique to improve pronunciation.

### Terry:

It works very well with recorded or broadcast media - music, movies, television or radio. Listen to native English speakers and quietly copy everything they say.

### Terry (*Rebecca repeating*):

Pay attention to the rhythm and intonation.

Stress the syllables that are stressed.

Mimic exactly what you hear.

But try not to do this with an actual person.

It doesn't work too well.



**ienglish**

LIFE IS THE CLASSROOM - IMMERSE YOURSELF

## STRATEGIES: **REPEATING** >> transcript

Okay, stop copying me.

Stop it. (sigh)

**Rebecca:**

Well, there you have it. Let's review today's episode.

Remember, "repeating" is a powerful strategy to help you learn and remember new vocabulary.

**Terry:**

Yes, create at least 5 encounters with small groups of words. Use those words in a short story or paragraph. Then, recombine them and create a new story!

**Rebecca:**

Also, do a lot of routine listening and reading! This will expose you to the same language again and again. And do a lot of writing. The writing process is repetitive. This means that you will go over your writing many times, as you plan, draft, revise and edit.

**Terry:**

Finally, use "repeating" to master sounds and features of pronunciation. Mimic or parrot other English speakers...

Once again, we have some great activities that go with this video, to help you practise these techniques.

**Rebecca:**

In this video, we've touched on how repetition can help us remember new language. In the next two videos we will look at other memory strategies.

**Terry:**

I remembered your birthday. So, how are you feeling about it?

**Rebecca:**

My birthday? Oh great...I love being 25.

**Terry:**

25?

**Rebecca:**

Well, I've been 25 for a few years now.



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**Terry:**

Oh, I see. You are "repeating" that age...  
I should try that.

**Rebecca:**

Okay, give me my cupcake.