

Activity 1

Print out or download a copy of the Vocabulary page and the Culture page of the iEnglish Notebook. Next, find some time to relax with your favorite snack and a funny English DVD, TV show, movie, web series, or go see some other visual entertainment, like a play. Make sure there are at least some funny parts to it. You've earned a break, and laughter is good for the soul!

As you relax and enjoy your food and drink, watch and listen carefully. Can you hear or see any new vocabulary items? If you hear the vocabulary item more than once, it's extra important to remember. Use the Vocabulary page to write down the new word and the context it appeared in. You might want to write more important words on the back of the page so you can analyze them later!

At the same time, pay attention to the funny moments in your TV show or movie. Even if you don't think they are funny, you might hear the audience laugh at them, or it may be clear that it is supposed to be funny. If you don't understand why something is funny, this is a good time to use your Culture page to investigate! Often funny moments in TV and film are the result of cultural norms being broken or almost broken!

Remember the situation and ask a native English speaker about it. If he or she doesn't think it's funny either, ask someone else until you understand the cultural reasons for the joke. When you learn about the cultural behavior or norm that was the source of the joke, use the Culture page to explore it.

When you have filled out these pages, compare your own pages to Veronika's sample pages. Answer these questions:

1. Do they look similar? Why or why not?
2. Which version (yours or Veronika's) do you prefer? Why?
3. Is there anything you want to add or subtract from the pages? Don't be afraid to do it!

Activity 2

Print out or download a copy of the Grammar page of the iEnglish Notebook. Visit a used book store in your area and pick up a short English novel, a biography of an interesting person, an interesting magazine, a book of short stories, a collection of poems, or some other interesting print source. Next, curl up (find a comfortable place to sit and relax) and start reading!

As you read, keep your Grammar page close by. When you find a new grammar construction, place a bookmark near it. Wait until you find a similar construction again (or three times). When you have two or three samples of the same construction, fill in the Grammar page with the information that you need. Fill in the sections one by one; use your three examples of the grammar form to guess the function. As a follow-up, consult the Internet, a grammar book, or a person you know to explain the form. When you have a good idea of the form, answer the following questions:

1. Was your guess about the function of the grammar construction correct?
2. In the future, do you think you will try to guess the function of new grammar forms, or just ask someone immediately? Why? Which method do you think will help you remember it better?
3. What parts of the Grammar page will you keep or change? Why?

Activity 3

Print out or download a copy of the Pronunciation page of the iEnglish Notebook. Next, find an English CD, radio station, online music video, or some other English music source. You're going to learn this song well, so pick a station and genre of music you enjoy!

When you come across (find by accident) a song you enjoy, try to learn the name of it. Next, find the words to the song online and print them out or keep them onscreen. Read the song lyrics aloud, without listening to the song. Do this several times.

Then, listen to the song as you look at the song lyrics. Are there any words that sound different than they look? If not, try another song! If the words DO sound different than they look, this is a good opportunity to try out your new Pronunciation page of your iEnglish Notebook.

You might not know why the words look and sound different than you think they should. If so, ask a native speaker to model the correct pronunciation for you! If you can't find a speaker to help you, try again! And again! People are the best sources for pronunciation help. However, if you REALLY can't find someone, consult an online video or website for more information.

When you learn the pronunciation rule, fill out the rest of the page and practise, practise, practise. Then, answer the following questions:

1. How helpful are songs for pronunciation? Can you think of any sources that might be better for you? Are these other sources limited in some other way (for example, music lyrics often contain informal and popular expressions, but business lecture podcasts probably only contain formal language that regular people on the street don't often use!)?
2. How important do you think it is to find fluent speakers to help with pronunciation? How can you increase the number of people you can go to for help with this?
3. What parts of the Pronunciation page do you like? What parts will you not use again?