

Premier Skills English

Speaking Skills How to improve your fluency Transcript

Jack: How you doing Rich?

Rich: Er... well, not that good actually.

Jack: Why? What's up?

Rich: I've got an interview next week.

Jack: Ah! You get really nervous, don't you? Just take a deep breath and you'll be fine.

Rich: It's easy for you to say. Would you mind helping me practise a little?

Jack: Sure. No problem at all.

Welcome

Rich: Hello my name's Rich

Jack: and I'm Jack

Rich: and welcome to this week's Premier Skills English podcast.

Jack: Where we talk about football and help you with your English.

Jack: What's happening this week, Rich?

Rich: In this week's podcast, we're talking about interviews and speaking fluency.

Jack: That's right. We've got a few tips to help you improve your speaking fluency.

Rich: How would you describe fluency, Jack? And why is it important?

Jack: In very general terms, it means talking naturally, not hesitating, or stopping too much when you are talking. It's important because it's part of communication and if we are not fluent it can make speaking difficult.

Rich: It can take a long time to be fluent in a language, but there are things you can try to do that will improve your fluency.

Jack: And it's not only language learners that can have problems with fluency. Some people, even in their first language, get nervous and become less fluent when speaking to others.

Rich: Tell me about it. I get really nervous when I have a job interview or have to speak in front of an audience or even when I'm speaking to someone I don't know.

Jack: Well, Rich - it's a problem that lots of people have and hopefully, in this podcast, we can help you a little and give all of our listeners some helpful advice.

Topic Focus

Jack: So, Rich, you said earlier that you have an interview. What's it for?

Rich: It's a job interview. Well, a kind of job. I want to be a football coach.

Jack: A coach? Really? Who are you going to coach? Manchester Utd?

Rich: Very funny. No, it's just as a coach where I live - coaching kids football.

Jack: That's great. So why do you have to have an interview?

Rich: I think the school want to get to know me a little. They want to know what experience I have teaching kids and teenagers.

Jack: You should be alright. You've worked for years as a teacher.

Rich: Yeah, I know but I just get so nervous in interviews. I start sweating, my mouth goes dry, I don't know what to say or I just start speaking nonsense. (speak quickly)

Jack: OK, OK, slow down. The first thing you need to do is pause and take a breath. Breathe through your belly - it can help you relax.

Rich: Yes, of course, you're right - deep breaths. Do you think you can help a little? Could you ask me some practise questions?

Jack: Alright, let's imagine we're at the interview.

Rich: Sounds good.

Jack: OK - why do you want to be a coach?

Rich: Well, the thing is, erm... Basically, the main reason I want to be a coach is so I can support my community and help the local football team. You see, the thing is, we've got some good players, but they are young and basically, they need some help. And at the end of the day, it will help me keep fit and I'll have some fun at the same time.

Jack: What qualities do you think make a good coach?

Rich: Sorry, what do you mean exactly by a quality?

Jack: I mean a characteristic or something that makes someone a good coach.

Rich: Ah, OK. Well, I'd say that the qualities that make a good coach are an idea of

fairness, that would be a good starting point and maybe leadership, too.

Jack: So, Rich... Can you tell me about a time when you've run a coaching session for children?

Rich: Yes, yes I can. I have not run many coaching sessions about football. Hold on, that doesn't sound very natural. Let me try again.

Jack: OK, Rich. Can you tell me about a time when you've run a coaching session for children?

Rich: I've not run many coaching sessions about football. That sounds better. But, I can remember one time. We played a 5-a-side match. I put the children in two teams. We had a great time.

Jack: OK, that sounded natural to me. Let's have one more question. Can you tell me more about what you actually did in the training session?

Rich: Yes, of course. In the training session, we did a training drill called walk the dog.

Jack: Nice, sounds interesting, go on.

Rich: Well, er, it's to practise dribbling skills - you know - when you have to run with the ball at your feet. It's called walk the dog because - you know - when you have a dog on a lead you have to keep it, like, close to you.

Jack: Good. And what do you have to do?

Rich: Well, like, you have to put lots of cones on the pitch. Some of them are orange and some are blue. The children have to imagine that the blue ones are lampposts and the orange ones trees.

Jack: Uh-huh?

Rich: The dogs, the balls, need to stop at all the, you know, lampposts so the children have to dribble and stop at all the blue cones.

Jack: And the trees?

Rich: I shout it's raining and they have to dribble their ball, or dog, to a tree - the orange cones.

Jack: Much better!

Rich: What?

Jack: Your answer. Much more fluent. I think you might have forgotten our roleplay!

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Language Focus - Fluency Tips

Jack: In the last section, we were talking about how we can improve our fluency when we're speaking and we have three tips for you to think about before and while you speak that we think will improve your speaking skills.

Rich: Tip number one. Take a deep breath. Sometimes you're not fluent because you are nervous and it has nothing to do with your language ability.

Jack: Yes, like you in interviews. It's important to relax before you speak and take a deep breath. Also, when you're speaking take a breath sometimes. It's possible to speak too fast as well as too slowly!

Rich: Tip number two. Use contractions and connect your words when you talk. Remember that speaking is very different from writing. We usually say 'I'm and I've' rather than 'I am' and 'I have'.

Jack: It's like how you were speaking earlier. Sometimes when you're nervous you might over-pronounce everything. You sounded a bit robotic - a bit like a robot. I know this is because you are nervous but 'I have not run many coaching sessions' doesn't sound good. You need to be a bit quicker and more natural. Use contractions. You should say 'I haven't run' not 'I have not run' 'I've done' is better than 'I have done'

Rich: Sounds good, what's tip number three?

Jack: Tip number three. Use language fillers. Rich used two types of fillers. He used words like *well* and *erm* and you know *erm* which we use to give ourselves time to think. Some similar words and phrases are *I mean*, *I guess* and *like*.

Rich: The other type of filler I used were cliches and set expressions. These words might have a meaning in some contexts but when they are used as fillers they are just giving the speaker time to think, too.

Jack: Earlier you said this, 'Well, the thing is, erm... Basically, the main reason I want to be a coach is so...' Here you are using *well* and *erm* but you are also using fillers like *basically* and *the thing is*. All of them are used to give you time to think.

Rich: So we use words and phrases such as *basically*, *actually* and *the thing is* to give ourselves some more thinking time.

Jack: A popular filler in interviews with footballers is the cliche 'at the end of the day'. It is used all the time. Earlier Rich said 'At the end of the day it will help me keep fit'. This phrase's original meaning is 'in conclusion' or 'in the end' but it doesn't really mean anything when it's used as a filler.

Rich: If you want to learn more about football cliches take a look at our podcast on cliches or a video I found from the BBC that shows how often these cliches are used by football players and managers. It's quite funny.

Jack: We've got some more information and tips about improving your speaking fluency in the activities on the page below.

Can you work out this week's football phrase?

Rich: Have you got a football phrase for us this week?

Jack: Yes, I have, but first, last week's football phrase. The phrase was *close season*. It means the period of the year when no football is played. It wasn't difficult to understand the meaning but the phrase was difficult to guess and not many of you got the phrase we were looking for.

Rich: So, a special well done to Ahmed Adam from Sudan and Phhchuong123 and anhduongspurs from Vietnam. You three got the right answer!

Jack: And an even bigger well done to Ahmed Adam from Sudan who is our fan of the week. Thanks for the article and the photos Ahmed Adam. Remember, if you want to be one of our fans of the week - just get in touch!

Rich: So, what's this week's football phrase, Jack?

Jack: It's ******* and it's something you mentioned earlier Rich when you were talking about coaching. A ******* is something you do at football practice - something that a coach gets their players to work on again and again. There are defensive ones, attacking ones, passing ones, shooting ones - lots of different types.

Rich: We even have them in English class when we ask our students to repeat words - sometimes we get our whole class to repeat words which can help with pronunciation.

Jack: That's right we do use them in English class, too. Before we leave you we just want to tell you about a new section on Premier Skills English. It's Niyati's vlog. Niyati is from India and loves football - she's making some vlogs for us and the first one is on the side of this page.

Rich: Tell Niyati what you think in the comments section and she will get back to you.

Jack: Don't forget to write your answers to our questions and make a guess at our football phrase in the comments below.

Rich: Bye for now and enjoy your football!