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**LANGUAGE, IDEAS, & INSPIRATION:**  
**English through TED Talks**



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Навчальний посібник “Language, Ideas, & Inspiration: English through TED Talks” базується на відео промовах TED Talks, які пропонують автентичний, надзвичайно різноманітний та мотиваційний контент, що його варто використовувати для вивчення та вдосконалення англійської мови, отримання нових ідей та натхнення для досягнення успіху. До запропонованих відеоматеріалів було розроблено комплекс завдань, спрямованих на всебічний розвиток мовленнєвих навичок студентів, підвищення їхньої мотивації до навчання та підготовку до ефективного використання англійської мови в різних комунікативних контекстах.

Навчальний посібник рекомендований для використання на заняттях з практики англійської мови на 1-4 курсах (перша та друга мови) спеціальності 035 «Філологія», Навчально-наукового інституту філології Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка.

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## INTRODUCTION

TED Talks offer authentic, diverse, and motivational content that exposes students to different accents, registers, and styles of English. Their integration into English language teaching supports the development of both receptive (listening, reading) and productive (speaking, writing) skills, enhances intercultural awareness, and stimulates academic inquiry – all of which are essential for philology students.

For this manual, TED Talks were carefully selected based on thematic relevance, language level, and speaker clarity. Preference was given to motivational and inspiring talks related to communication, learning, mastering skills, and pursuing personal goals, as these topics are consistently of interest to young people and are relevant to – or integrated into – many other areas of study. Talks typically range from 8 to 16 minutes to maintain student engagement.

*Language, Ideas, & Inspiration: English through TED Talks* includes five units, each based on a different TED Talk. Every unit consists of the following parts:

### 1. **BEFORE YOU WATCH Activities**

Before watching the video, students engage in preparatory tasks designed to activate prior knowledge and introduce key vocabulary. Activities include brainstorming sessions, predicting the content based on the title and speaker background, and discussing guiding questions.

### 2. **WHILE YOU WATCH Activities**

During the viewing phase, students focus on comprehension tasks such as note-taking, completing gap-fill exercises, answering specific questions, and identifying main ideas and supporting details. Short segments of the video may be replayed to highlight particular linguistic features (e.g., idioms, intonation patterns, discourse markers).

### 3. **AFTER YOU WATCH Activities**

After watching the video, students participate in discussions, debates, or role-playing exercises based on the content of the talk. They may also be assigned tasks such as writing summaries, reviews, or comparative analyses with other texts. Focus is placed on developing speaking, writing, and critical analysis skills.

These materials can be used in the classroom, assigned as homework, or completed independently.

## VIDEO 1. THE FIRST 20 HOURS – HOW TO LEARN ANYTHING

### TED Talk by Josh Kaufman

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MgBikgcWnY>



*Josh Kaufman is the author of the #1 international bestseller, 'The Personal MBA: Master the Art of Business', as well as the upcoming book 'The First 20 Hours: Mastering the Toughest Part of Learning Anything.' Josh specializes in teaching people from all walks of life how to master practical knowledge and skills. In his talk, he shares how having his first child inspired him to approach learning in a whole new way.*

#### ❖ BEFORE YOU WATCH

##### **TASK 1. Discuss the following questions.**

1. Think about a skill you've always wanted to learn. What has stopped you from learning it so far?
2. How long do you think it takes to become “good” at a new skill?
3. What strategies do you use when you try to learn something new?

**TASK 2.** The title of the talk is “The First 20 Hours – How to Learn Anything.” What do you think the speaker will suggest about learning new skills?" **Write 2-3 predictions and share them with a partner or a small group.**

**TASK 3.** Make sure you understand the meanings of these words and phrases. As you watch the video, pay attention how they are used in context.

**entrepreneur** - someone who starts their own business, especially when this involves seeing a new opportunity

**deprivation** - a situation in which you do not have things or conditions that are usually considered necessary for a pleasant life:

**disconcerting** - making someone feel uncertain and uncomfortable or worried

**fiddle around** - to spend time doing small things that are not important or necessary

**geek** - someone who is very interested in a particular subject and knows a lot about it

**skill acquisition** - the process by which individuals learn and develop proficiency in a particular skill or area of expertise

**junkie** - someone who wants to have or do something all the time

**magnitude** - quantity, number

**performance** - how well a person, machine, etc. does a piece of work or an activity

**folks** – people, esp. those of a particular group or type

**put in** - to spend (time) especially at some occupation or job

**stack** (of books) - a pile of things arranged one on top of another

**juggle** - to throw several objects up into the air, and then catch and throw them up repeatedly so that one or more stays in the air, usually in order to entertain people

**astounded** - very surprised or shocked

**deconstruct** - to analyze a concept or skill by breaking it down into smaller components in order to understand its structure and function

**bundle** - a number of things that have been fastened or are held together

**willpower** - the ability to control your own thoughts and the way in which you behave

**commitment** - an agreement or pledge to do something in the future

**stick with** - to continue trying hard to do something difficult

**rocket science** – (informal) something very difficult to do or understand

**intimidating** - making you feel frightened or nervous

**pop medley** - a musical arrangement that combines excerpts from multiple popular songs into a single, continuous piece

**light smb up** - to cause someone to become noticeably excited or animated

❖ **WHILE YOU WATCH**

**TASK 4. Video comprehension questions: choose the correct option.**

1. What was Josh Kaufman's initial reaction to becoming a parent, particularly concerning his personal interests?

A) He felt relieved to have a break from his entrepreneurial work.

B) He was excited about the opportunity to learn new parenting skills.

C) He felt he would never have free time again to pursue learning new skills.

D) He immediately started planning how to balance work and family life.

2. What is the central argument against the '10,000 Hour Rule' as it applies to learning new skills?

A) The rule is only applicable to professional athletes and musicians, not to general skill acquisition.

B) The rule is a complete myth and has no basis in scientific research.

C) The rule is accurate, but only if one dedicates at least 5 years to mastering a skill.

D) The rule overestimates the time required to become reasonably proficient in a new skill, as initial progress is rapid.

3. What is the primary emotional barrier that prevents people from acquiring new skills, according to Josh Kaufman?

A) The lack of intellectual capacity to understand complex concepts.

B) The fear of failure and the perceived time commitment required.

C) The physical limitations that prevent one from practicing consistently.

D) The lack of access to resources and expert guidance.

4. What was the profession of Josh Kaufman before his daughter, Lela, was born?

- A) He was a yoga teacher.
- B) He was a professional athlete.
- C) He was an author.
- D) He was a chess grandmaster.

5. What is the significance of K. Anders Ericsson's research in relation to the '10,000 Hour Rule'?

A) Ericsson's research proved that the '10,000 Hour Rule' applies to all skill levels.

B) Ericsson's research showed that the '10,000 Hour Rule' is a myth.

C) Ericsson's research focused on expert-level performance, suggesting the '10,000 Hour Rule' primarily applies to those at the highest levels of their fields.

D) Ericsson's research determined that the '10,000 Hour Rule' is only applicable to chess grandmasters.

6. What is the role of self-correction in Josh Kaufman's method for rapid skill acquisition?

A) Self-correction is unnecessary as long as one practices for 10,000 hours.

B) Self-correction is important for identifying and fixing mistakes, and it can be achieved by using a few resources to learn how to self-edit.

C) Self-correction is only possible with the help of an expert coach.

D) Self-correction is not mentioned in Josh Kaufman's method.

7. What specific instrument did Josh Kaufman use as an example to demonstrate his rapid skill acquisition method?

A) A piano.

B) A guitar.

C) A ukulele.

D) A violin.



8. What is the suggested strategy for overcoming barriers to practice when learning a new skill?

A) Practice for at least 10,000 hours.

B) Ignore distractions and focus on doing the work by managing one's willpower and minimizing interruptions.

C) Find an expert coach to guide you.

D) Learn as much as possible before starting to practice.

**TASK 5. Answer the questions.**

1. What are the four steps to rapid skill acquisition proposed by Josh Kaufman?

2. What is the origin of the '10,000 Hour Rule', and how did it become popularized?

3. What example does Josh Kaufman provide to demonstrate the effectiveness of his rapid skill acquisition method?

4. What prompted Josh Kaufman to question the traditional approach to skill acquisition?

5. What is the Learning Curve, and how does it relate to skill acquisition?

6. What is the recommended time investment for achieving basic proficiency in a new skill, according to Josh Kaufman?

7. What specific advice does the presenter give regarding the selection of a new skill to learn?

**TASK 6. Complete the summary of the video with the words from the vocabulary list.**

*astounded*

*commitment*

*deconstruct*

*pop medley*

*deprivation*

*disconcerted*

*entrepreneurs*

*willpower*

*skill acquisition*

Josh Kaufman, an \_\_\_\_\_ experienced a major life shift when he and his wife Kelsey welcomed their daughter, Lela. Managing a newborn while running businesses from home led to severe sleep \_\_\_\_\_, making Josh feel \_\_\_\_\_ about losing his free time. Like many, he believed in the '10,000 Hour Rule' popularized by Malcolm Gladwell, which suggested that \_\_\_\_\_

requires years of practice. However, Josh realized this rule applies mainly to elite performers, not everyday learners.

Frustrated but curious, Josh researched how long it actually takes to become good at something. He found that with focused effort, one can become quite proficient in just 20 hours. He outlined four steps: \_\_\_\_\_ the skill into essential parts, learn enough to self-correct, eliminate distractions by strengthening \_\_\_\_\_, and practice for at least 20 hours. When Josh followed these principles, he was \_\_\_\_\_ by the results. After practicing for about a month, he was able to play a \_\_\_\_\_ on the ukulele, mastering songs that only needed four basic chords.

Josh concluded that the biggest barrier to learning is not intellectual but emotional. With 20 hours of \_\_\_\_\_ to intentional practice, anyone can overcome fear and frustration to successfully acquire a new skill.

### ❖ AFTER YOU WATCH

#### **TASK 7. Discuss the questions.**

1. What surprised you most about the talk?
2. Do you agree with Kaufman's idea that 20 hours is enough to learn anything? Why or why not?
3. What is the first skill you would like to try learning in 20 hours?
4. How do Kaufman's ideas change the way you think about learning?

**TASK 8. Group Activity: “How People Learn New Skills”.** Apply the ideas from Josh Kaufman's TED Talk, and work together to create a learning plan for acquiring a skill in 20 hours.

#### **Step 1: Brainstorm Skill Ideas**

Brainstorm 3-5 skills that interest you. These can be anything from learning to play an instrument to running a marathon or cooking a new dish. Be creative and think outside the box! Write these ideas down on a sheet of paper or a digital document.

Examples of skills:

- Playing the guitar
- Cooking a new recipe
- Learning a new language
- Drawing or painting
- Playing a sport

### **Step 2: Apply Kaufman's 4 Steps**

Choose one skill from your list and create a 20-hour learning plan for it. Use Josh Kaufman's 4-step process for rapid skill acquisition:

1. **Deconstruct the Skill:** Break the skill down into smaller, manageable parts. What is the most important thing to learn first?
2. **Learn Enough to Self-Correct:** What resources will you need to start practicing (e.g., books, videos, websites)?
3. **Remove Practice Barriers:** What distractions or obstacles might you face? How can you minimize them? Think about your **willpower** and how to stay focused.
4. **Practice for 20 Hours:** Plan how you will spend your 20 hours. For example, will you practice for 45 minutes each day for a month? Or a few longer sessions?

### **Step 3: Present Your Plan**

Share your 20-hour learning plan with the class.

- Each group will present their plan, explaining how they would break down the skill, what resources they would use, how they would overcome distractions, and how they would practice.
- After each presentation, the class will have the chance to ask questions and give feedback.

## VIDEO 2. 10 WAYS TO HAVE A BETTER CONVERSATION

### TED Talk by Celeste Headlee

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1vskiVDwl4>



*When your job hinges on how well you talk to people, you learn a lot about how to have conversations – and that most of us don't converse very well. Celeste Headlee has worked as a radio host for decades, and she knows the ingredients of a great conversation: honesty, brevity, clarity and a healthy amount of listening. In this insightful talk, she shares 10 useful rules for having better conversations. "Go out, talk to people, listen to people," she says. "And, most importantly, be prepared to be amazed."*

#### ❖ BEFORE YOU WATCH

##### **TASK 1. Discuss the following questions.**

1. What makes a conversation interesting or boring?
2. Can you think of a conversation you recently enjoyed? Why was it good?
3. What makes a conversation difficult or awkward?
4. Is being a good listener more important than being a good speaker? Why or why not?

**TASK 2.** The title of the talk is “10 Ways to Have a Better Conversation”. **Brainstorm 5 tips you think might be included in the talk.**

**TASK 3. Make sure you understand the meanings of these words and phrases. As you watch the video, pay attention how they are used in context.**

**offensive** - causing someone to feel upset and angry, often because of being rude

**trivial** - having little value or importance

**polarized** - divided into two completely opposing groups

**hone** - to direct something such as an ability to make it more effective

**coherent** - if an argument, set of ideas, or a plan is coherent, it is clear and carefully considered, and each part of it connects or follows in a natural or reasonable way

**pontificate** - to speak or write and give your opinion about something as if you knew everything about it and as if only your opinion was correct

**pushback** - negative reaction to something new that has been introduced

**pundit** - a person who knows a lot about a particular subject and is therefore often asked to give an opinion about it

**food stamp** - a piece of paper that is given to poor people by the government and with which they can then buy food

**vulnerable** - able to be easily physically, emotionally, or mentally hurt, influenced, or attacked

**bound and determined** - having a very strong feeling that one is going to do something and not allow anyone or anything to get in the way : very determined

**err on the side of caution** - to be especially careful rather than taking a risk or making a mistake

**equate** - to consider one thing to be the same as or equal to another thing

**brag** - to speak too proudly about what you have done or what you own

**condescending** - treating someone as if you are more important or more intelligent than them

**stay out of the weeds** – do not go into too much unnecessary detail

**bolster** - to support or improve something or make it stronger

**boil down to** - if a situation or problem boils down to something, that is the main reason for it

**runner-up (to)** - a person who comes second in a race or competition

❖ **WHILE YOU WATCH**

**TASK 4. Video comprehension questions: choose the correct option.**

1. What is one of the primary reasons conversations often devolve into arguments in contemporary society?

- A) People are too agreeable and avoid conflict.
- B) People are more likely to compromise on important issues.
- C) People are less likely to listen to each other due to increased polarization and division.
- D) People are too focused on finding common ground.

2. What critical skill is often overlooked in education, contributing to a decline in effective communication?

- A) The ability to use technology effectively.
- B) The ability to sustain coherent, confident conversation.
- C) The ability to write persuasive essays.
- D) The ability to debate political issues.

3. According to Celeste Headlee, what does 'do not multitask' truly mean in the context of having a conversation?

- A) Avoiding complex topics.
- B) Focusing on multiple speakers at once.
- C) Being present and fully focused on the person you are talking to.
- D) Using technology to enhance the conversation.

4. Why is it important to avoid pontificating during a conversation?

- A) To ensure you dominate the conversation and assert your opinions effectively.
- B) To prevent others from feeling intimidated by your knowledge and expertise.
- C) To foster a balanced exchange where both parties can share and understand different perspectives.

D) To avoid the risk of exposing your vulnerabilities and uncertainties.

5. What is the primary reason Celeste Headlee advises against repeating yourself during a conversation?

A) It helps to reinforce your point and ensure the other person understands your message.

B) It can be perceived as condescending and boring, diminishing the quality of the interaction.

C) It allows you to clarify any misunderstandings and correct any misinterpretations.

D) It demonstrates your confidence and conviction in your own opinions.

6. Why does Celeste Headlee suggest that if you don't know something, you should admit it?

A) To appear humble and relatable to the other person.

B) To avoid the risk of spreading misinformation or false claims.

C) To encourage the other person to share their knowledge and expertise.

D) To maintain control of the conversation by steering it towards familiar topics.

**TASK 5. Answer the questions.**

1. According to the TED Talk, what did Pew Research discover about the current state of American society in relation to political and social issues?

2. What is the significance of using open-ended questions in a conversation, and how does it enhance the interaction between individuals?

3. Why is it important not to equate your personal experiences with those of the person you are conversing with?

4. What was Henry Higgins' advice in 'My Fair Lady' regarding polite conversation, and why is this advice no longer sufficient in today's world?

5. What evidence suggests that technology, particularly smartphones, has contributed to a decline in conversational competence among teenagers?

6. What specific characteristic defines individuals who are more likely to share intimate details during a conversation?

7. What specific behavior exemplifies a failure to ‘go with the flow’ in a conversation, and what negative consequences can arise from this behavior?

8. What does Celeste Headlee mean by saying that “A good conversation is like a miniskirt; short enough to retain interest, but long enough to cover the subject”?

**TASK 6.** Here is a mixed list of the 10 tips mentioned by Celeste Headlee. **Put the tips in the correct order as presented in the talk.**



If you don't know, say that you don't know

Do not multitask

Be brief

Stay out of the weeds

Do not pontificate

Go with the flow

Try not to repeat yourself

Use open-ended questions

Listen

Don't equate your experience with theirs

**TASK 7.** Complete the summary of the video with the words from the vocabulary list.

*pontificate*

*brag*

*equate*

*trivial*

*coherent*

*polarized*

*stay out of the weeds*

*pundit*

*condescending*

In her TED Talk, Celeste Headlee explores why meaningful conversations have become increasingly difficult in today's society. She points out that even \_\_\_\_\_ topics can spark heated debates because people are now highly \_\_\_\_\_. Instead of engaging in dialogue, many individuals avoid conversations altogether, unfriending people or refusing to interact with those who hold different views. This lack of open communication means we are not really listening to each other, which deepens division.

Headlee stresses that a good conversation should be \_\_\_\_\_ and balanced between speaking and listening. However, many people tend to \_\_\_\_\_, delivering their opinions as if they were \_\_\_\_\_ on a news show, rather than engaging in genuine exchange. She reminds listeners that conversations are not performances, and it's essential to stay present and not let personal agendas take over.

One key rule she shares is to \_\_\_\_\_ – meaning not to get lost in unnecessary details that derail the conversation. Instead, speakers should ask open-ended questions, encouraging richer and more thoughtful answers. Another important point is to avoid trying to \_\_\_\_\_ your experiences with someone else's. When someone shares a personal story, it's not helpful to immediately relate it to your own experience or \_\_\_\_\_ about something similar you've gone through. Each experience is unique, and focusing on yourself can seem \_\_\_\_\_ and dismissive of the other person's feelings.

Headlee also warns against repeating oneself, as it comes across as patronizing and tedious. Instead, she encourages honesty, humility, and genuine curiosity. Rather than pretending to know everything, it's better to admit when you don't know something. Overall, her advice aims to help people reconnect through authentic conversations, emphasizing that good communication is one of the most vital skills in the modern world.

## ❖ AFTER YOU WATCH

### **TASK 8. Share your opinion on the following prompts.**

1. Celeste Headlee emphasizes the importance of balancing talking and listening in a conversation, suggesting that technology, particularly smartphones, has disrupted this balance. Analyze your own communication habits, considering the role of technology in your interactions. How might you consciously adjust your behavior to cultivate deeper, more attentive conversations in your daily life?

3. Headlee presents several rules for improving conversational skills, including avoiding multitasking, using open-ended questions, and resisting the urge to equate your experiences with others. Choose two of these rules that you find particularly relevant to your own communication style. Describe specific instances where applying these rules could have enhanced your interactions, and outline a plan for incorporating them into your future conversations.

### **TASK 9. Role-Play Practice.**

Work in pairs, apply the ideas in a realistic context:

- Choose a common conversation topic (e.g., traveling, favorite hobbies, a recent movie).
- Have a 3-minute conversation where you consciously apply at least three tips from the video (e.g., really listen, ask open-ended questions, don't multitask).
- After the conversation, partners give each other feedback: "Which tips did your partner use well?"

### **TASK 10. Write a short action plan answering the following questions:**

- Which two conversation tips will I start practicing immediately?
- In what kind of situations will I practice them (e.g., with friends, family, at work)?
- What challenges might I face, and how will I overcome them?

## VIDEO 3. WHY WE STRUGGLE LEARNING LANGUAGES

TED Talk by Gabriel Wyner

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBMfg4WkKL8>



*Gabriel Wyner is a polyglot, opera singer, and author based in Chicago who developed a fast, immersive method for learning languages. After becoming fluent in German in just 14 weeks, he pursued Italian, French, Russian, Hungarian, Spanish, and is now learning Japanese. A graduate of the University of Southern California with degrees in Mechanical Engineering and Vocal Arts, he later earned triple master's degrees in Opera, Lieder, and Voice in Vienna. His book *Fluent Forever* outlines his language learning method, and in 2017, his app project became the most successful language learning Kickstarter ever.*

### ❖ BEFORE YOU WATCH

#### **TASK 1. Discuss the following questions.**

1. Why do people struggle to learn new languages? Brainstorm reasons (e.g., lack of time, memory, motivation, poor methods).
2. Which challenges have *you* faced?
3. Do you think some people are naturally better at learning languages?
4. Do you agree with the statement “Anyone can learn a language fluently with the right method”?
5. What languages have you studied? Which one was easiest/hardest? Why? Have you tried learning a language on your own?

**TASK 2.** The title of the talk is “Why We Struggle Learning Languages”. What do you think the speaker will say? Do you expect to hear tips, science, or personal stories? What advice do you hope he gives? **Write 2-3 predictions.**

**TASK 3. Make sure you understand the meanings of these words and phrases. As you watch the video, pay attention how they are used in context.**

**exposure (to something)** - the fact of experiencing something or being affected by it because of being in a particular situation or place

**perk** - an advantage or something extra, such as money or goods, that you are given because of your job

**fearless** - not afraid of anything; brave in difficult or risky situations

**hold back** - to stop yourself from doing something or showing emotion

**superior** - better than someone or something else in quality, skill, or status

**outweigh** - to be more important or valuable than something else

**nerd** - a person who is very interested in a particular subject (often academic or tech-related); sometimes used negatively, but now often positive

**side effect** - an unexpected or unwanted result of an action, often used with medicine

**sign up for (something)** - to officially join or agree to take part in an activity or service

**kick out of** - to force someone to leave a place, group, or institution

**hold a conversation** - to talk with someone in a way that keeps the discussion going

**addicted to** - unable to stop doing something that's harmful or overly consuming

**pursue a degree in (something)** - to study a subject at university to earn a diploma

**placement test** - a test to decide your skill level and put you in the right class

**cheat on (someone/something)** - to be dishonest or break the rules in a test or relationship

**efficient** - doing something well without wasting time or resources

**disgust** - a strong feeling of dislike or revulsion

**stick (with someone)** - to stay loyal or continue supporting someone

**tweak** - to make small changes to improve something

**acquisition** - the act of gaining possession of something; in the context of language, it refers to the process of learning and developing proficiency in a language

**fluency** - the ability to speak or write a language easily and accurately

### ❖ WHILE YOU WATCH

#### **TASK 4. Video comprehension questions: choose the correct option.**

1. According to the video, what is a common misconception about language acquisition in children?

A) Children learn languages more effectively because they have better access to language learning resources.

B) Children have an innate ability to learn languages that diminishes with age.

C) Children are more motivated to learn languages due to peer pressure.

D) Children learn languages faster because they are less afraid of making mistakes.

2. According to the author, what is the primary reason why adults often outperform children in language learning?

A) Adults have more free time to dedicate to language learning compared to children.

B) Adults are less inhibited and more willing to take risks when speaking a new language.

C) Adults have developed effective learning strategies and possess greater cognitive abilities.

D) Adults have better access to language learning resources and technology.

3. What is the key to effective language learning for adults, as demonstrated by the author's experience?

A) Rote memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules.

B) Immersion in a language-learning program with strict rules and consequences.

C) Connecting the language to real-life experiences, emotions, sounds, and tastes.

D) Studying the language for an extended period, such as seven years, to build a strong foundation.

4. What was the author's initial conclusion about language learning after studying Hebrew?

A) Language learning was best suited for individuals with a natural talent for linguistics.

B) Language learning was an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

C) Language learning was not a viable option for them.

D) Language learning required a specific type of educational environment.

5. What pivotal shift in the author's academic pursuits ultimately led to their successful language learning experiences?

A) Transitioning from science to music, specifically opera, which required learning multiple languages.

B) Deciding to focus solely on mastering one language at a time for better retention.

C) Enrolling in a specialized language immersion program for nuclear engineers.

D) Adopting a strict self-study regimen that prioritized grammar and vocabulary memorization.

6. What specific advice does the author give to adult language learners seeking to improve their language acquisition abilities?

A) Focus on memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary lists to build a strong foundation.

B) Immerse themselves in the culture of the language they are learning to create emotional connections.

C) Practice speaking the language with native speakers as often as possible to improve fluency.

D) Utilize memory tools and systems of association to enhance recall and retention.

**TASK 5. Answer the questions.**

1. According to the author, what specific advantages do children possess in language learning, particularly between six months and a year old?

2. What was unique about the intensive language-learning program the author participated in to learn German, and what was the stipulation of the contract?

3. According to the author, what is unfair about comparing adult language learners to young native-speaking children?

4. What specific languages did the author need to learn as part of their opera degree, and how did this differ from their previous language learning experiences?

5. According to the author, what is a critical element that is missing from most memory tools, and how does this impact language learning?

**TASK 6. Complete the summary of the video with the words from the vocabulary list.**

*efficient*

*signed up for*

*hold back*

*fearless*

*acquisition*

*kicked out of*

*stick*

*fluency*

*superior*

*outweigh*

*exposure*

*tweak*

Many people \_\_\_\_\_ from learning a new language, often believing that children are \_\_\_\_\_ in language \_\_\_\_\_. This idea leads to frustration, especially when adults, after years of study, struggle to keep up with young native speakers. However, research and experience suggest that adults are

actually more \_\_\_\_\_ learners when given the same amount of \_\_\_\_\_, because their mature thinking skills and developed learning strategies can \_\_\_\_\_ the natural advantages of children - such as their \_\_\_\_\_ attitude toward making mistakes and their early ability to hear subtle sound differences.

The speaker reflects on personal experiences, describing early struggles with Hebrew, where despite years of study, they retained very little. It wasn't until they \_\_\_\_\_ an immersive language program with strict rules (where speaking English could get you \_\_\_\_\_ the course) that real progress happened. This intense method forced the brain to build meaningful associations with the new language.

The key insight was the importance of emotional and sensory connections to memory. Learning isn't just about memorizing vocabulary, but about connecting words to real experiences and emotions. This means learners need to \_\_\_\_\_ traditional methods, making them more personal and dynamic. With time, commitment, and the willingness to \_\_\_\_\_ with it, even adults can reach \_\_\_\_\_ - perhaps even more successfully than children.

### ❖ AFTER YOU WATCH

#### **TASK 7. Share your opinion on the following prompts.**

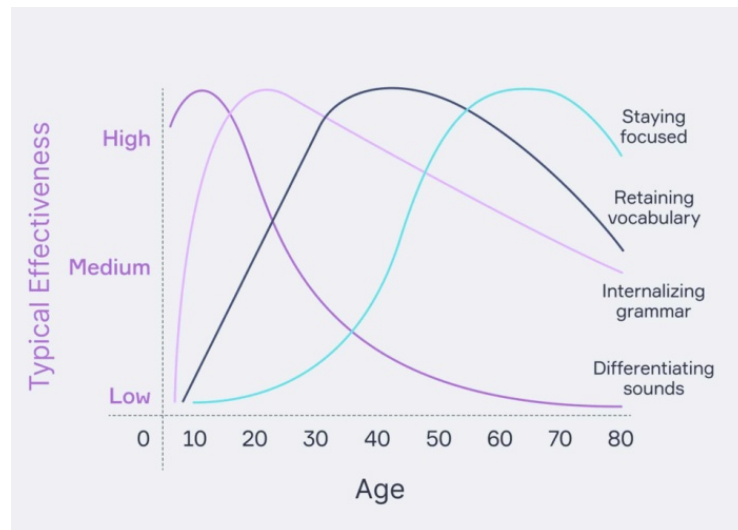
1. Reflect on a time when you felt discouraged or frustrated while learning a new skill. How does the author's experience with language learning resonate with your own challenges and eventual successes or failures?

2. The author emphasizes the importance of connecting language learning with personal experiences and emotions. Describe a situation where you successfully learned something by associating it with real-life feelings, memories, or sensory details. How did this approach enhance your understanding and retention?

3. The text contrasts the language learning abilities of children and adults, ultimately arguing that adults can be more effective learners. Consider your own learning style and strategies. In what ways do you think your approach to learning differs from that of a child, and how can you leverage your adult cognitive abilities to improve your language acquisition or other learning endeavors?

**TASK 8. Writing Task:** Analyze and Reflect on Language Learning Across Ages.

Study the diagram showing how different aspects of language learning (staying focused, retaining vocabulary, internalizing grammar, and differentiating sounds) vary with age.



**Now write an essay** (200–250 words) responding to the following prompt:

Based on the diagram, what are the advantages and disadvantages of learning a new language at different ages? How might adults use their strengths to overcome the challenges shown in the chart? Support your ideas with reference to the graph and your own experiences or opinions.

Your essay should include:

- An **introduction** that summarizes the trends shown in the diagram.
- A **comparison** of abilities across age groups.
- An **opinion** on the best age to start learning a language and why.
- **Suggestions** for how learners at any age can improve their language learning using their strengths.

## VIDEO 4. INSIDE THE MIND OF A MASTER PROCRASTINATOR

### TED Talk by Tim Urban

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arj7oStGLkU&t=49s>



*Tim Urban knows that procrastination doesn't make sense, but he's never been able to shake his habit of waiting until the last minute to get things done. In this hilarious and insightful talk, Urban takes us on a journey through YouTube binges, Wikipedia rabbit holes and bouts of staring out the window -- and encourages us to think harder about what we're really procrastinating on, before we run out of time.*

### ❖ BEFORE YOU WATCH

#### **TASK 1. Discuss the following questions.**

1. What does procrastination mean to you?
2. Do you consider yourself a procrastinator? Why or why not?
3. When do you procrastinate the most (e.g., schoolwork, chores, decisions)?
4. Is procrastination always a bad thing?

#### **TASK 2. Procrastination Self-Assessment Quiz**

##### **Instructions:**

Rate how often each statement applies to you on a scale from **1 (Never)** to **5 (Always)**. Be honest – this is for your own self-awareness.

## **Section A: Behavioral Patterns (Tasks & Habits)**

1. I delay starting tasks even when I know they're important.
2. I wait until the last minute to complete assignments or chores.
3. I find myself doing less urgent things instead of what really needs to be done.
4. I underestimate how long tasks will take and often run out of time.
5. I abandon tasks midway if I get bored or distracted.

## **Section B: Emotional Reactions (Feelings & Avoidance)**

6. I feel anxious or guilty about things I haven't started yet.
7. I avoid starting tasks because I feel overwhelmed.
8. I worry about failing or not doing something perfectly, so I don't start.
9. I feel a short-term sense of relief when I avoid a task.
10. I procrastinate even when it leads to negative consequences.

## **Section C: Distractions & Time Management**


11. I frequently check my phone or social media while working.
12. I use entertainment or social activities to escape responsibilities.
13. I have trouble focusing on one task at a time.
14. I often don't follow the schedule or to-do list I set for myself.
15. I feel like time "just disappears" when I should be productive.

## **Scoring & Analysis**

### **Step 1: Add up your scores**

Minimum: 15      Maximum: 75


### **Step 2: Interpret your total score**

**15–30** →  *Low Procrastinator*

You're mostly proactive and manage your tasks well. Keep using what works!

**31–50** →  *Moderate Procrastinator*

You procrastinate occasionally. You're aware of it, but it may not seriously impact your goals – yet. Some adjustments could help.

**51–75** →  *High Procrastinator*

Procrastination is likely affecting your productivity, goals, and well-being. It's time to explore why you procrastinate and try new strategies.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. Which section had your highest scores – behavior, emotion, or distractions?
2. What kind of procrastinator are you: *Avoider*, *Thrill-Seeker*, or *Indecisive*?
3. What changes could you make this week to reduce procrastination?

**TASK 3. Make sure you understand the meanings of these words and phrases. As you watch the video, pay attention how they are used in context.**

**thesis** - a long essay or dissertation involving personal research, typically required for a university degree

**senior thesis** - large, independent research project that students take on during their senior year of high school or college to fulfill their graduation requirement

**bump up** - to move (something or someone) to a higher level, position, etc.

**kick up\go into high gear** - to become very active and productive

**pull an all-nighter** - to stay up all night

**perplex** - to confuse and worry someone slightly by being difficult to understand

**MRI** - abbreviation for magnetic resonance imaging: a system for producing electronic pictures of the organs inside a person's body, using radio waves and a strong magnetic field

**gratification** - pleasure or satisfaction, or something which provides this

**take the wheel** - to take or assume control (of something).

**YouTube spiral** – “We've all done it. You start looking at a short clip - maybe only a few seconds long - and end up clicking on related content after related content for hours and hours on end. It's all just far tooooooo interesting!”

**tribe** - a social group comprising numerous families, clans, or generations together with slaves, dependents, or adopted strangers

**overlap** - if two or more activities, subjects, or periods of time overlap, they have some parts that are the same:

**guardian angel** - an angel or other supernatural being who is appointed to protect, guide, or otherwise watch over a particular individual

**dormant** - not active or growing but with the ability to be active at a later time

**mayhem** - a situation in which there is little or no order or control

**What struck me...**- used to say that one thinks something is unexpected or unusual

**momentum** - the force that keeps an object moving or keeps an event developing after it has started

**cram** (for\into) – (inf.) to do many things in a short period of time

**epiphany** - a moment when you suddenly feel that you understand, or suddenly become conscious of, something that is very important to you

**sneaky** - doing things in a secret and unfair way

#### ❖ WHILE YOU WATCH

#### **TASK 4. Video comprehension questions: choose the correct option.**

1. According to the author, what is the primary difference between the brains of procrastinators and non-procrastinators?

A) Non-procrastinators have a larger prefrontal cortex, enabling better decision-making skills.

B) Procrastinators have an ‘instant gratification monkey’ in their brain, which distracts them from productive tasks, while non-procrastinators are solely guided by a ‘rational decision-maker’.

C) Non-procrastinators have a stronger ‘panic monster’ that keeps them in check and prevents them from delaying tasks.

D) Procrastinators lack the ability to visualize the future and make long-term plans, unlike non-procrastinators.

2. In the context of the author's explanation, what role does the ‘panic monster’ play in the life of a procrastinator?

A) It encourages the ‘instant gratification monkey’ to take control, leading to more procrastination.

B) It is a constant source of anxiety that prevents procrastinators from enjoying leisure activities.

C) It is dormant until a deadline approaches or a significant consequence looms, at which point it scares the 'instant gratification monkey' and prompts action.

D) It helps procrastinators maintain a healthy balance between work and play, ensuring they meet their obligations.

3. What does the author suggest is the key to managing procrastination effectively, as indicated towards the end of the video?

A) Eliminating the 'instant gratification monkey' entirely from one's thought process.

B) Developing a healthy relationship with deadlines through a balance between the 'gratification monkey' and the 'rational decision maker'.

C) Relying solely on the 'panic monster' to force oneself to complete tasks on time.

D) Avoiding long-term planning and focusing only on immediate wants and needs.

4. What realization prompted the author to write about procrastination on waitbutwhy.com?

A) He realized that non-procrastinators were more successful in their careers.

B) He was perplexed by his own procrastination habits and wanted to explain the mindset of procrastinators to those who don't procrastinate.

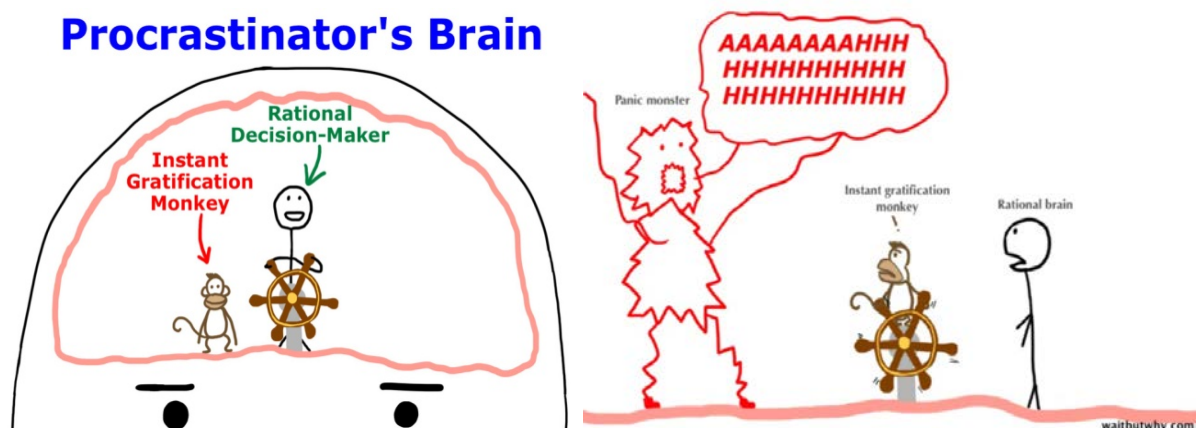
C) He wanted to prove that procrastinators are more creative than non-procrastinators.

D) He needed to meet a deadline for a blog post and procrastination was the first topic that came to mind.

5. In the author's analogy of the brain, what is the role of the 'rational decision-maker' before the 'instant gratification monkey' takes over?

A) To encourage relaxation and leisure activities.

- B) To suggest productive uses of time.
- C) To negotiate with the 'instant gratification monkey'.
- D) To monitor the 'panic monster'.
6. According to the author, what is the primary danger of long-term procrastination, as opposed to procrastination with looming deadlines?
- A) It leads to immediate and visible failures.
- B) It results in intense pressure and stress due to approaching deadlines.
- C) It is less visible and quieter, leading to regrets about unfulfilled dreams and potential.
- D) It activates the 'panic monster' more frequently, causing anxiety.
7. What is the intended effect of the 'life calendar' that the author presents at the end of the text?
- A) To demonstrate the insignificance of individual actions in the grand scheme of life.
- B) To encourage readers to reflect on the limited time they have and consider what they are procrastinating on.
- C) To illustrate the importance of planning every week of one's life in detail.
- D) To promote a sense of panic and urgency about the passage of time.



### **TASK 5. Answer the questions.**

1. Describe the author's initial experience with writing papers in college, particularly focusing on the 90-page senior thesis.

2. According to the author, what is the 'dark playground', and why is it a dangerous place for procrastinators?

3. What was the author's reaction to the feedback he expected to receive versus the feedback he actually received on his senior thesis?

4. According to the author, what are the three entities that influence the decisions of a procrastinator's brain?

5. In the author's analogy, what are the basic needs that the 'instant gratification monkey' prioritizes for humans?

6. What does the author suggest that everyone is procrastinating on, and why is it significant?

7. What is the author's ultimate advice for overcoming procrastination, and how does it relate to the 'life calendar' analogy?

### **TASK 6. Complete the summary of the video with the words from the vocabulary list.**

*epiphany*

*take the wheel*

*pull an all-nighter*

*perplex*

*thesis*

*dormant*

*gratification*

*overlap*

*cram*

In college, the speaker developed a strong habit of procrastination, often waiting until the very last moment to start assignments. For regular papers, he would do nothing until the day they were due, and for his massive 90-page senior \_\_\_\_\_, he planned to work gradually but ended up doing the entire thing in 72 hours, forcing him to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ under intense pressure. This experience – and others like it – led him to reflect on why he procrastinates and why his behavior tends to \_\_\_\_\_ non-procrastinators.

As a writer and blogger, he had an \_\_\_\_\_ and developed a theory about procrastination: in a procrastinator's brain, the rational decision-maker

doesn't stay in control. Instead, the "Instant \_\_\_\_\_ Monkey" often \_\_\_\_\_, steering behavior toward fun, easy tasks instead of meaningful work. Things only change when the "Panic Monster," usually \_\_\_\_\_, awakens close to a deadline and scares the monkey off – temporarily restoring productivity.

He explains that without deadlines, the panic monster stays asleep, and the procrastination can go on indefinitely. This leads to what he calls the "dark playground," a place where pleasure and guilt \_\_\_\_\_ – it's fun at first, but filled with anxiety and regret. Many people write to him, expressing deep regret over lifelong procrastination that kept them from pursuing their dreams.

He ultimately argues that everyone is a procrastinator to some extent, but what matters is how we manage it. A balanced relationship between the gratification monkey and rational thinker is key. He ends with a "life calendar" showing the weeks in a 90-year life, urging us to confront what we're really procrastinating on. His message: you can escape the dark playground – but to do that, you should probably start today.

### ❖ AFTER YOU WATCH

#### **TASK 7. Share your opinion on the following prompts.**

1. The author discusses the internal struggle between the 'rational decision-maker' and the 'instant gratification monkey'. Describe a time when you experienced a similar conflict within yourself. What were the competing desires or impulses, and what was the outcome? What did you learn from that experience about your own decision-making process?

2. The author introduces the concept of the 'dark playground' as a space where procrastination leads to immediate gratification but ultimately results in long-term regret. Can you identify an area in your life where you might be engaging in a similar pattern? What are the immediate rewards you receive from

procrastinating in this area, and what are the potential long-term consequences you might face?

3. The author concludes by presenting a 'life calendar', emphasizing the limited number of weeks we have to pursue our goals and dreams. How does this visual representation of time impact your perspective on procrastination? What is one thing you have been putting off that you now feel more motivated to pursue, and what steps can you take to start working towards it today?

### **TASK 8. Role Play Activity “Inside the Procrastinator’s Mind”**

The purpose is to explore how procrastination works in our minds by acting out the key characters from Tim Urban’s TED Talk.

**Step 1.** Get into groups of 3-4 students. Each group member should take one of the following roles:

- **Rational Decision-Maker:** Wants to be productive and stay on task.
- **Instant Gratification Monkey:** Distracts you with fun or easy things instead of what you *should* be doing.
- **Panic Monster:** Stays quiet at first but *wakes up* when a deadline or crisis is near, pushing everyone into action.
- (Optional) **Narrator:** Introduces the scene, explains what’s happening in the mind, and guides the audience through the performance.

**Step 2.** Choose a Scenario. Pick one real-life procrastination situation. Examples:

- Writing a paper the night before it’s due
- Studying for an important exam
- Cleaning the house before guests arrive
- Preparing for a big presentation
- Starting a personal goal like a fitness routine or creative project

**Step 3.** Create Your Script. It should show:

- the **Rational Decision-Maker** trying to begin the task

- the **Monkey** interrupting and offering distractions
- the **Panic Monster** waking up close to the deadline
- how the group finally finishes (or fails to finish) the task

Make it fun! Use props, drama, **or** humor to bring the characters to life.

**Step 4.** Perform Your Skit.

As others watch, ask them to pay attention to:

- When the Monkey took over
- What triggered the Panic Monster
- Whether the Rational Decision-Maker won in the end

**Step 5.** Reflect (Written or Group Discussion)

After the performance, answer or discuss these questions:

1. Which character did you relate to most, and why?
2. How did the group show the effects of procrastination?
3. What could the Rational Decision-Maker have done to prevent the Monkey from taking over?
4. How can you apply what you've learned to your own life?

## VIDEO 5. DON'T STRIVE TO BE FAMOUS, STRIVE TO BE TALANTED

### The TED Talk by Maisie Williams

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTYOpfGvlwc>



*Margaret Constance Williams, known as Maisie Williams, is an English actress. She made her professional acting debut in 2011 as Arya Stark of Winterfell in the HBO world phenomenon Game of Thrones. Selected among 300 British actresses, she plays the role of a tomboyish young girl from a noble family for which she won numerous awards.*

*Maisie tells the story of working on what ended up becoming the biggest television show of all time from the age of 12. She discusses why she thinks right now is the perfect time to build tools for communities and how her platform, daisie, will redefine creative collaboration.*

### ❖ BEFORE YOU WATCH

#### **TASK 1. Discuss the following questions.**

1. Why do people want to become famous?
2. What are some advantages and disadvantages of fame?
3. Is it better to focus on developing your talent or on becoming well-known? Why?
4. Agree or disagree with the following statements. Support your ideas with real-life examples.
  - Fame leads to happiness.

- Talent is more important than fame.
- Social media makes people famous for the wrong reasons.
- Hard work is more valuable than popularity.
- Being famous is more stressful than it seems.

**TASK 2.** The title of the talk is “Don’t Strive to Be Famous, Strive to Be Talanted.” What do you think the speaker’s main message will be? What personal experience might the speaker share? **Discuss with a partner or a small group.**

**TASK 3. Make sure you understand the meanings of these words and phrases. As you watch the video, pay attention how they are used in context.**

**imposter** - a person who pretends to be someone else in order to deceive others, often for fraudulent gain.

**back-to-back** - happening one after another, without interruption

**icing on the cake** - something that makes a good situation even better

**council house** - a house that is owned by the local council and rented to people at a low rent

**crank up** - to increase or improve smth

**drown out the noise** - if a loud noise drowns out another noise, it prevents it from being heard

**harness** - to control something, usually in order to use its power

**summon** - gather together something for use

**enroll** - to put someone onto the official list of members of a course, college, or group

**no-brainer** - something such as a decision that is very easy or obvious

**grubby** – dirty or messy

**crooked (teeth)** - not forming a straight line, or having many bends

**out of place** - not comfortable in or not suitable for a situation

**make the cut** - to meet the requirements necessary for an application to be successful or to be selected from a group of candidates.

**blessing in disguise** - something that seems bad or unlucky at first but causes something good to happen later

**jog on** – (BrEn, slang) get lost, piss off

**have yet to** - if you have yet to do something, you have not done it

**perch** - to sit on or near the edge of something

**cheeky** - slightly rude or showing no respect, but often in a funny way

**minefield** - an area of land or water that contains mines (= bombs)

**whopping** - extremely large, immense

**swig** – (informal) to drink, especially by swallowing large amounts in a series of single actions

**deem** - to come to think or judge

**launch** to begin something such as a plan or introduce something new such as a product

**fickle** - likely to change your opinion or your feelings suddenly and without a good reason

#### ❖ WHILE YOU WATCH

#### **TASK 4. Video comprehension questions: choose the correct option.**

1. According to Maisie Williams, what realization did she come to after watching TED talks and reading ‘Talk Like Ted’?

A) That becoming a successful public speaker requires extensive formal training and a wide-ranging vocabulary.

B) That memorable and impactful speeches require talent, a wide-ranging vocabulary, and years of experience.

C) That talent and a wide-ranging vocabulary are not the only components of a memorable and impactful speech; you just need to have something to say, and not be afraid to say it.

D) That the most important aspect of public speaking is to emulate the style and delivery of famous TED speakers.

2. What was the significance of Maisie Williams's experience with dance during her childhood?

- A) It was a hobby that she pursued casually without any serious aspirations.
- B) It was a way for her to socialize and make friends outside of school.
- C) It was a means of escape and emotional expression during difficult times, solidifying her desire to pursue a career in the performing arts.
- D) It was primarily a form of physical exercise that helped her stay in shape.

3. What was the purpose of Daisy, the social media app created by Maisie Williams and Dom?

- A) To provide a platform for celebrities to connect with their fans and share exclusive content.
- B) To offer a space for artists to connect with each other and potential employers, facilitating connections and career opportunities.
- C) To serve as a marketplace for artists to sell their artwork and merchandise directly to consumers.
- D) To create a social network exclusively for actors and actresses to share audition tips and industry news.

4. What was Maisie Williams's perspective on her education at an ordinary school?

- A) She believed it provided her with a strong foundation for her future acting career.
- B) She felt it adequately prepared her for the challenges of the performing arts industry.
- C) She found it unremarkable, as she was neither exceptionally successful nor notably struggling, often going unnoticed by her teachers.
- D) She considered it a waste of time and actively sought ways to avoid attending.

5. What was the initial outcome of Maisie Williams's audition for performing arts school, and what barrier did she subsequently face?

A) She was rejected due to a lack of talent, which motivated her to pursue acting instead.

B) She was accepted but could not attend because of financial constraints, highlighting the theme of unfairness.

C) She was offered a full scholarship, allowing her to pursue her dream of becoming a professional dancer.

D) She deferred her acceptance to focus on her acting career, realizing it was a more viable path.

6. How did Louise Johnston influence Maisie Williams's career path?

A) Louise discouraged Maisie from pursuing acting, believing she was better suited for dance.

B) Louise provided financial support for Maisie to attend performing arts school.

C) Louise recognized Maisie's talent and encouraged her to audition for a local talent show, leading to her acting career.

D) Louise introduced Maisie to Dom, with whom she later created the social media app Daisy.

7. What does Maisie Williams identify as a crucial element in her successful audition for an acting role?

A) Her extensive formal training in acting techniques.

B) Her ability to harness her insecurities and self-doubt, channeling them into her performance.

C) Her previous experience as a professional dancer, which gave her confidence on stage.

D) Her natural talent for memorizing lines and delivering them flawlessly.

8. According to Maisie Williams, what is the primary goal of the social media app Daisy, which she co-created with Dom?

A) To provide a platform for established artists to showcase their work and gain recognition.

B) To connect artists with each other and with potential employers, facilitating career opportunities.

C) To create a social network exclusively for actors and actresses to share audition tips and industry news.

D) To offer online courses and workshops for artists to develop their skills and techniques.

**TASK 5. Answer the questions.**

1. What specific childhood dream did Maisie Williams have, and how did she initially pursue it?

2. How did Maisie Williams's initial rejection from performing arts school ultimately lead to her career in acting?

3. What advice does Maisie Williams offer at the end of her talk to inspire others, and what central theme does she emphasize?

4. How does Maisie Williams describe her family situation and upbringing in relation to her career aspirations?

5. According to the text, what was Maisie Williams' reaction to not receiving government funding for performing arts school?

6. What does Maisie Williams mean when she describes herself as 'possibly an imposter in disguise' at the beginning of her talk?

**TASK 6. Complete the summary of the video with the words from the vocabulary list.**

*out of place*

*enroll*

*blessing in disguise*

*fickle*

*no-brainer*

*make the cut*

*icing on the cake*

*harness*

*launch*

Maisie Williams shares her journey of how striving to be talented — rather than famous — led her to success. Growing up feeling \_\_\_\_\_ in an ordinary environment, Maisie dreamed of becoming a dancer. She learned to \_\_\_\_\_ her emotions through dance from a young age and \_\_\_\_\_ in classes, seeing

this path as a \_\_\_\_\_. Though she \_\_\_\_\_ at a performing arts school, financial struggles prevented her from attending, which later turned out to be a \_\_\_\_\_.

Instead of giving up, she seized new opportunities. A mentor encouraged her to audition for acting roles, which \_\_\_\_\_ her career. Maisie realized that the entertainment world is \_\_\_\_\_, and real success comes not from chasing fame, but from developing true talent.

Later, she co-founded Daisy, a social media platform for artists, which became the \_\_\_\_\_ of her journey. Maisie's story encourages others to stay resilient, be open to change, and trust that their talents can lead them to where they truly belong.

### ❖ AFTER YOU WATCH

#### **TASK 7. Discuss the questions.**

1. What is the main message Maisie Williams wanted to share? Why does she believe being talented is more important than being famous?
2. Can you think of a time when a disappointment in your life turned out to be a blessing in disguise?
3. Describe a time when you pursued a dream or goal that seemed out of reach. What challenges did you encounter, and how did you respond to them? What did you learn about yourself in the process?

**TASK 8. Creative Writing:** Write a motivational letter to your future self about how you will focus on developing your talent rather than chasing fame.

#### **Purpose of the Task:**

- Reflect on your personal goals.
- Apply the ideas from Maisie Williams' speech.
- Encourage your future self to stay motivated and focused.

## Structure to Follow:

Part	What to Include
<b>Introduction</b>	Greet your future self (e.g., "Dear Future Me") and explain why you are writing this letter. Mention the TED Talk as inspiration.
<b>Body Paragraph 1</b>	Describe the talents you want to develop and how you will harness your abilities over time.
<b>Body Paragraph 2</b>	Talk about the challenges you might face and how you plan to overcome them without getting distracted by the desire for fame.
<b>Body Paragraph 3</b>	Reflect on why developing your skills is a <i>blessing in disguise</i> compared to chasing quick recognition. Give an example.
<b>Conclusion</b>	End with words of encouragement, a motivational quote, or a reminder to stay true to yourself.

## Requirements:

- Word count: 200-250 words.
- Use at least 3-5 expressions from the vocabulary list (optional challenge):

## Tips:

- Think about a real talent or passion you have (or want to discover).
- Imagine how proud your future self would be reading this letter.
- Don't be afraid to show emotions and dreams!

## ANSWER KEY

### VIDEO 1. The First 20 Hours – How to Learn Anything

#### TASK 4. Video comprehension questions: choose the correct option.

1. C) He felt he would never have free time again to pursue learning new skills.
2. D) The rule overestimates the time required to become reasonably proficient in a new skill, as initial progress is rapid.
3. B) The fear of failure and the perceived time commitment required.
4. C) He was an author.
5. C) Ericsson's research focused on expert-level performance, suggesting the '10,000 Hour Rule' primarily applies to those at the highest levels of their fields.
6. B) Self-correction is important for identifying and fixing mistakes, and it can be achieved by using a few resources to learn how to self-edit.
7. C) A ukulele.
8. B) Ignore distractions and focus on doing the work by managing one's willpower and minimizing interruptions.

#### TASK 5. Answer the questions.

1. The four steps to rapid skill acquisition proposed by Josh Kaufman are: deconstructing the skill, learning enough to self-correct, removing practice barriers, and practicing consistently.
2. The '10,000 Hour Rule' originated from studies on expert-level performance by K. Anders Ericsson and became popularized after Malcolm Gladwell wrote about it in his book, *Outliers: The Story of Success*.
3. Josh Kaufman provides the example of learning to play the ukulele using only four chords to demonstrate the effectiveness of his rapid skill acquisition method.
4. Josh Kaufman was prompted to question the traditional approach to skill acquisition by the birth of his daughter and the subsequent realization that he had limited time for personal interests, particularly learning new skills.

5. The Learning Curve illustrates that the initial phase of skill acquisition is often rapid, suggesting that significant progress can be made relatively quickly when learning something new.

6. Josh Kaufman suggests that investing 20 hours in a new skill is sufficient to go from complete novice to reasonably proficient.

7. The presenter advises individuals to pursue learning something they genuinely want to do, emphasizing the importance of enjoyment in the skill acquisition process.

**TASK 6. Complete the summary of the video with words from the vocabulary list.**

Josh Kaufman, an **entrepreneur** experienced a major life shift when he and his wife Kelsey welcomed their daughter, Lela. Managing a newborn while running businesses from home led to severe sleep **deprivation**, making Josh feel **disconcerted** about losing his free time — especially the time he loved to use **to acquire a new skill**. Like many, he believed in the "10,000 Hour Rule" popularized by Malcolm Gladwell, which suggested that **skill acquisition** requires years of practice. However, Josh realized this rule applies mainly to elite performers, not everyday learners.

Frustrated but curious, Josh researched how long it actually takes to become good at something. He found that with focused effort, one can become quite proficient in just 20 hours. He outlined four steps: **deconstruct** the skill into essential parts, learn enough to self-correct, eliminate distractions by strengthening **willpower**, and practice for at least 20 hours. When Josh followed these principles, he was **astounded** by the results. After practicing for about a month, he was able to play a **pop medley** on the ukulele, mastering songs that only needed four basic chords.

Josh concluded that the biggest barrier to learning is not intellectual but emotional. With 20 hours of **commitment** to intentional practice, anyone can overcome fear and frustration to successfully acquire a new skill.

## **VIDEO 2. 10 Ways to Have a Better Conversation**

### **TASK 4. Video comprehension questions: choose the correct option.**

1. C) People are less likely to listen to each other due to increased polarization and division.
2. B) The ability to sustain coherent, confident conversation.
3. C) Being present and fully focused on the person you are talking to.
4. C) To foster a balanced exchange where both parties can share and understand different perspectives.
5. B) It can be perceived as condescending and boring, diminishing the quality of the interaction.
6. B) To avoid the risk of spreading misinformation or false claims.

### **TASK 5. Answer the questions.**

1. According to the TED Talk, Pew Research discovered that American society is currently more polarized and divided than it has ever been in history, leading to a decreased willingness to compromise and listen to opposing viewpoints.
2. The significance of using open-ended questions lies in their ability to elicit detailed and thoughtful responses, encouraging the speaker to reflect and share more comprehensively, thereby enriching the conversation.
3. It is important not to equate your personal experiences with those of the person you are conversing with because all experiences are individual and unique, and focusing on your own experiences shifts the focus away from the speaker and their narrative.
4. Henry Higgins' advice in 'My Fair Lady' was to stick to the weather and your health for polite conversation; however, this advice is no longer sufficient due to issues like climate change and anti-vaccine movements, which have made even these topics potentially contentious.
5. Pew Research indicates that about a third of American teenagers send more than one hundred texts a day, and most are more likely to text their friends than to

engage in face-to-face conversations, suggesting that technology contributes to a decline in conversational competence.

6. The speaker is less and less vulnerable and is more and more likely to open up the inner recesses of his or her mind to the listener.

7. An example of failing to 'go with the flow' is when a host asks a question that seems out of nowhere or has already been answered, indicating they stopped listening because they were focused on formulating their own clever question, which disrupts the natural progression of the conversation.

8. Celeste Headlee means that we should be brief.

**TASK 6. Put the tips in the correct order as presented in the talk.**

1. Do not multitask
2. Do not pontificate
3. Use open-ended questions
4. Go with the flow
5. If you don't know, say that you don't know
6. Stay out of the weeds
7. Try not to repeat yourself
8. Don't equate your experience with theirs
9. Listen
10. Be brief

**TASK 7. Complete the summary of the video with words from the vocabulary list.**

In her TED Talk, Celeste Headlee explores why meaningful conversations have become increasingly difficult in today's society. She points out that even **trivial** topics can spark heated debates because people are now highly **polarized**. Instead of engaging in dialogue, many individuals avoid conversations altogether, unfriending people or refusing to interact with those who hold different views.

This lack of open communication means we are not really listening to each other, which deepens division.

Headlee stresses that a good conversation should be **coherent** and balanced between speaking and listening. However, many people tend to **pontificate**, delivering their opinions as if they were **pundits** on a news show, rather than engaging in genuine exchange. She reminds listeners that conversations are not performances, and it's essential to stay present and not let personal agendas take over.

One key rule she shares is to **stay out of the weeds**—meaning not to get lost in unnecessary details that derail the conversation. Instead, speakers should ask open-ended questions, encouraging richer and more thoughtful answers. Another important point is to avoid trying to **equate** your experiences with someone else's. When someone shares a personal story, it's not helpful to immediately relate it to your own experience or **brag** about something similar you've gone through. Each experience is unique, and focusing on yourself can seem **condescending** and dismissive of the other person's feelings.

Headlee also warns against repeating oneself, as it comes across as patronizing and tedious. Instead, she encourages honesty, humility, and genuine curiosity. Rather than pretending to know everything, it's better to admit when you don't know something. Overall, her advice aims to help people reconnect through authentic conversations, emphasizing that good communication is one of the most vital skills in the modern world.

### **VIDEO 3. Why We Struggle Learning Languages**

**TASK 4. Video comprehension questions: choose the correct option.**

1. B) Children have an innate ability to learn languages that diminishes with age.
2. C) Adults have developed effective learning strategies and possess greater cognitive abilities.
3. C) Connecting the language to real-life experiences, emotions, sounds, and tastes.

4. C) Language learning was not a viable option for them.
5. A) Transitioning from science to music, specifically opera, which required learning multiple languages.
6. B) Immerse themselves in the culture of the language they are learning to create emotional connections.

**TASK 5. Answer the questions.**

1. According to the author, children possess specific advantages in language learning, particularly between six months and a year old, due to their heightened ability to perceive sounds in ways that adults cannot.
2. According to the video, the unique aspect of the intensive language-learning program the author participated in to learn German was the contractual stipulation that speaking any language other than German would result in expulsion without a refund.
3. According to the author, it is unfair to compare adult language learners to young native-speaking children because children have thousands of hours immersed in their native language, an exposure level adults often cannot match, as stated in the text.
4. As part of their opera degree, the author was required to learn French, German, and Italian, which differed from their previous language learning experiences with Hebrew and Russian, where they only learned the alphabets and retained minimal vocabulary, according to the text.
5. According to the author, a critical element missing from most memory tools is what can be associated in practice, meaning the tools do not carry with them the real-world connections and experiences necessary for effective language learning, as stated in the text.

**TASK 6. Complete the summary of the video with the words from the vocabulary list.**

Many people **hold back** from learning a new language, often believing that children are **superior** in language **acquisition**. This idea leads to frustration,

especially when adults, after years of study, struggle to keep up with young native speakers. However, research and experience suggest that adults are actually more **efficient** learners when given the same amount of **exposure**, because their mature thinking skills and developed learning strategies can **outweigh** the natural advantages of children - such as their **fearless** attitude toward making mistakes and their early ability to hear subtle sound differences.

The speaker reflects on personal experiences, describing early struggles with Hebrew, where despite years of study, they retained very little. It wasn't until they **signed up for** an immersive language program with strict rules (where speaking English could get you **kicked out of** the course) that real progress happened. This intense method forced the brain to build meaningful associations with the new language.

The key insight was the importance of emotional and sensory connections to memory. Learning isn't just about memorizing vocabulary, but about connecting words to real experiences and emotions. This means learners need to **tweak** traditional methods, making them more personal and dynamic. With time, commitment, and the willingness to **stick** with it, even adults can reach **fluency** - perhaps even more successfully than children.

#### **VIDEO 4. Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator**

**TASK 4. Video comprehension questions: choose the correct option.**

1. B) Procrastinators have an 'instant gratification monkey' in their brain, which distracts them from productive tasks, while non-procrastinators are solely guided by a 'rational decision-maker'.
2. C) It is dormant until a deadline approaches or a significant consequence looms, at which point it scares the 'instant gratification monkey' and prompts action.
3. B) Developing a healthy relationship with deadlines through a balance between the 'gratification monkey' and the 'rational decision maker'.

4. B) He was perplexed by his own procrastination habits and wanted to explain the mindset of procrastinators to those who don't procrastinate.
5. B) To suggest productive uses of time.
6. C) It is less visible and quieter, leading to regrets about unfulfilled dreams and potential.
7. B) To encourage readers to reflect on the limited time they have and consider what they are procrastinating on.

**TASK 5. Answer the questions.**

1. Initially, the author procrastinated on all papers in college, including the 90-page senior thesis, waiting until the last three days to write it, resulting in two all-nighters and a poorly written thesis.
2. The 'dark playground' is a state of procrastination characterized by easy and fun activities that lack purpose or deadlines, making it dangerous because it extends the effects of procrastination indefinitely without the check of the 'panic monster'.
3. The author expected his senior thesis to be poorly received due to the last-minute effort, but he jokingly claims it was called the 'best one they had ever seen', before admitting that it was 'very, very bad'.
4. According to the author, the three entities influencing a procrastinator's brain are the 'rational decision-maker', the 'instant gratification monkey', and the 'panic monster'.
5. In the author's analogy, the 'instant gratification monkey' prioritizes keeping humans 'well fed, rested, and propagating', viewing humans as merely an animal species with basic needs.
6. The author suggests that everyone is procrastinating on something significant in life, particularly related to long-term goals and dreams, which is significant because it leads to regrets and a sense of being in a 'dark place'.

7. The author's advice is to start today and to be aware of the 'instant gratification monkey', which relates to the 'life calendar' by emphasizing the limited time available and the need to prioritize meaningful actions over immediate pleasures.

**TASK 6. Complete the summary of the video with the words from the vocabulary list.**

In college, the speaker developed a strong habit of procrastination, often waiting until the very last moment to start assignments. For regular papers, he would do nothing until the day they were due, and for his massive 90-page senior **thesis**, he planned to work gradually but ended up doing the entire thing in 72 hours, forcing him to **pull two all-nighters** and **cram** under intense pressure. This experience – and others like it – led him to reflect on why he procrastinates and why his behavior tends to **perplex** non-procrastinators.

As a writer and blogger, he had an **epiphany** and developed a theory about procrastination: in a procrastinator's brain, the rational decision-maker doesn't stay in control. Instead, the "Instant **Gratification** Monkey" often **takes the wheel**, steering behavior toward fun, easy tasks instead of meaningful work. Things only change when the "Panic Monster," usually **dormant**, awakens close to a deadline and scares the monkey off – temporarily restoring productivity.

He explains that without deadlines, the panic monster stays asleep, and the procrastination can go on indefinitely. This leads to what he calls the "dark playground," a place where pleasure and guilt **overlap** – it's fun at first, but filled with anxiety and regret. Many people write to him, expressing deep regret over lifelong procrastination that kept them from pursuing their dreams.

He ultimately argues that everyone is a procrastinator to some extent, but what matters is how we manage it. A balanced relationship between the gratification monkey and rational thinker is key. He ends with a "life calendar" showing the weeks in a 90-year life, urging us to confront what we're really procrastinating on. His message: you can escape the dark playground – but to do that, you should probably start today.

## **VIDEO 5. Don't Strive To Be Famous, Strive To Be Talented**

### **TASK 4. Video comprehension questions: choose the correct option.**

1. C) That talent and a wide-ranging vocabulary are not the only components of a memorable and impactful speech; you just need to have something to say, and not be afraid to say it.
2. C) It was a means of escape and emotional expression during difficult times, solidifying her desire to pursue a career in the performing arts.
3. B) To offer a space for artists to connect with each other and potential employers, facilitating connections and career opportunities.
4. C) She found it unremarkable, as she was neither exceptionally successful nor notably struggling, often going unnoticed by her teachers.
5. B) She was accepted but could not attend because of financial constraints, highlighting the theme of unfairness.
6. C) Louise recognized Maisie's talent and encouraged her to audition for a local talent show, leading to her acting career.
7. B) Her ability to harness her insecurities and self-doubt, channeling them into her performance.
8. B) To connect artists with each other and with potential employers, facilitating career opportunities.

### **TASK 5. Answer the questions.**

1. Maisie Williams had a childhood dream of becoming a professional dancer, which she initially pursued by enrolling in dance classes at the age of eight and later expressing her desire to attend stage school at the age of ten.
2. Maisie Williams's rejection from performing arts school led to her career in acting when a mentor encouraged her to participate in a local talent show, which she won, leading to her signing with an acting agency.
3. Maisie Williams advises others to trust in their abilities, act as if they belong, question everything, and dare to dream big, emphasizing the central theme that there is a place for everyone and that it is important to create a vision.

4. Maisie Williams describes her family situation as unconventional, growing up in a three-bedroom council house with several siblings after her parents' divorce, yet she maintained aspirations for a career in the performing arts despite her ordinary background, indicating that her dreams transcended her circumstances.

5. Maisie Williams felt the 'cold sting of unfairness' and was heartbroken when she did not receive government funding for performing arts school, as it meant she could not attend despite being accepted.

6. When Maisie Williams describes herself as 'possibly an imposter in disguise,' she is expressing a sense of self-doubt or insecurity about her qualifications to give a TED talk, despite her success as an actress, suggesting she feels like she may not fully belong in that role.

**TASK 6. Complete the summary of the video with the words from the vocabulary list.**

Maisie Williams shares her journey of how striving to be talented – rather than famous – led her to success. Growing up feeling **out of place** in an ordinary environment, Maisie dreamed of becoming a dancer. She learned to **harness** her emotions through dance from a young age and **enrolled** in classes, seeing this path as a **no-brainer**. Though she **made the cut** at a performing arts school, financial struggles prevented her from attending, which later turned out to be a **blessing in disguise**.

Instead of giving up, she seized new opportunities. A mentor encouraged her to audition for acting roles, which **launched** her career. Maisie realized that the entertainment world is **fickle**, and real success comes not from chasing fame, but from developing true talent.

Later, she co-founded Daisy, a social media platform for artists, which became the **icing on the cake** of her journey. Maisie's story encourages others to stay resilient, be open to change, and trust that their talents can lead them to where they truly belong.

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