

Welcome to the InFLuency Podcast, the podcast that will help you become more fluent and influence others with your English. And today we are in episode number 36 and we're going to talk about vocabulary upgrade, or in other words, how to feel smarter in English.

Okay. I have to start with a little pet peeve that I have about all these videos promising how to sound smart, how to sound cool, how to sound this, how to sound, that this is why I deliberately wrote how to feel because, um. Whenever we tell that or whenever we say that to ourselves, even if you say to yourself, Oh, I want to sound smarter.

It's always about how people perceive you and how people see you. And I think that this is the wrong way to look at things because at the end of the day, it's all about how you show up and how you feel. Because if you constantly gaze yourself from the outside, it's tricky because it's. Holds a lot of judgment and a lot of expectations that you have to live up to. And then the feeling that you are not enough comes up and this is not the right direction. So as a teacher and as a coach and as a leader in my field. I really feel that words are important and as you watch and consume some of these fantastically, amazingly valuable videos, I want you to pay attention to the words that are used there.

Because when the outcome always has to do with other people, how they perceive you, there might be a problem with that and you don't want to assume that mindset. And. Perception because it's going to keep you stuck. So just a word of wisdom from me to you that like you just need to become more aware of the language that people use and speak in this industry and in this field.

And again, like I think that most of the videos of how to sound smart and English. Are incredibly valuable. They're so good. The teachers are amazing, but I think it's just lack of awareness when people always talk about how you sound and how people perceive you. But I think there's a problem with the fact that people keep reiterating this idea of how it makes you sound or what would people think of you and how would people think better of you, rather than just focusing on how you should.

Be and feel and experience things. Okay. Having said that, I do think that. We need to do some work, right? Because ultimately, if we feel that we are less sophisticated or we always use the same words and we bore ourselves to death with the words that we choose to use, and we feel very limited and it's nowhere near the way we express ourselves in our native language.

Yeah. We need to put in some work. It's not just about the mindset. And again, it will make you feel more expressive. It will make you feel more powerful, and that alone should be the result and the outcome that we're seeking. Now, what do I mean by feeling more expressive

or even feeling smarter? Although using different words doesn't make you any less smart. You're already smart, my friend. You are already smart. What I mean is that, and I'm going to talk about that in the audio that you're going to hear. We settle. We settle for words that don't describe exactly what we want. We settle for words that. Come out easily, but we know that there is a better word for it and we know that there is a better word for it because we've heard that word again and again and again.

We just don't use it. So that's the challenge. That's the struggle because there is the English in our head. And there we are, super witty and funny and smart and expressive, and there's the English that comes out of her mouth and it's little more limited. And this is why I decided to create this video for you today.

Before we listen to the audio, I want to tell you that I have a new feature on my website called ask Hodara where you can record a question and send it to me. And I've already received a bunch of questions. And it is so great. It's, I love it. I love hearing your voices and I feel automatically more connected to you and I really want to feature your voices on my podcast and if for some reason you want to ask me a question, but you do not want to send me a recording, I want to encourage you to do that anyway, because if the reason why you don't want to send me a recording is your English.

Then it defeats the whole purpose because you want to speak up no matter what judgment or fear you have, because your voice matters. And I want to feature your voice as hope. Please record a question and send it to me. And in a few weeks I'm going to make an episode where I play a question and answer it.

So it's going to be like we are in the same studio together, even though it's coronavirus time. And. You can't really be in my studio right now. And also because we're probably an ocean apart, so we will have to settle for a recording. I'm going to put a link to the ask Kadar page in the show notes, so go check it out right now or later and ask me your question about anything.

It doesn't even have to be just about pronunciation. It can be about anything. Okay. Let's all tune into what we've all come here for. Which is how to feel and sound smarter in English. Let's listen.

One of the biggest challenges of speakers of English as a second language is that we settle. We settle for a word that is not the right word, but it's close enough. We settle for being general than being specific, and we settle for and not sounding as intelligent and sophisticated and witty as we may be in our native language.

And the reason why that happens is mostly vocabulary. Now, if you haven't watched my

video about how to enhance your speaking vocabulary, then I really recommend that you watch it after watching this video. I'm going to put a link to it in the description.

But what I said there is that usually when communicating, we have, a circle of basic words that we retrieve rather easily, that are really easy for us to use in a conversation. We don't need to think much and we don't have to hesitate before using them.

And then there was another circle of words, that circle is the words that you know, but you don't use, also known as passive vocabulary. And that's like a really broad and incredible list of words that when we hear those words, we know exactly what they mean. But we never seem to be able to pull them out when we need them. And what I recommend in that video is to focus on those words.

And the last circle is words that you don't know and you don't use. And a lot of times people put all their efforts into learning words that they don't know and they are less likely to use, and that is counterproductive. So what I recommended in that video was to focus on taking all that passive vocabulary and turning it into active vocabulary. So, basically growing the smaller circle.

What I'm going to offer in this video and in the series of videos - #vocabularyupgrade - is a list of words that are basic words, are probably easy for you to retrieve. But I'm going to offer different words for you to use instead of those words.

So these are probably words that you know or phrases that you know, but you tend to never use. So I would just point out those words to you, and at the same time, at the end of the video - so stick around until the end - at the end of the video, I'm going to share with you the technique and strategy to integrate it into your speech.

Because it's all nice and fun when you see a video and you're like, "Oh yeah, these words", but then you never use it. So we want you to see results. So at the end, I'm going to share with you how you can actually do that, so stick around.

If you are new to this channel, welcome. And I want you to know that this is the right place for you if you want to improve your confidence, your clarity, and your fluency in English. And we are going to make you feel super happy about who you are and how you speak in English, even if English is not your first language.

Let's get started with the first word. So the first word is "I think". We use "I think" all of the time, and that's totally fine. You are a human being, and human beings think, and you want to share that. But then you find yourself using, "I think, I think, I think, I think, I think" all of the time, and sometimes you just want to vary it a bit, or you want to sound smarter to yourself.

Again, it's not necessarily about the other person and how they perceive you, it's about how you feel yourself, expressing yourself, hearing yourself using the same word over and over again. That's the frustrating part. And as you feel more varied, it also boosts your confidence. And when you're more confident, obviously, the words are more accessible in general. Because nerves, and judgment, and anxiety - all of these things just shut down your fluency. And we don't want that.

So, "I think". If you constantly say "I think", here are a few phrases that you can use instead. I often use "I feel that ...", okay? It's a little different because "I feel" and "I think" are two different emotions, but a lot of times I would use "I feel", instead of "I think". "I feel that we really need to consider all our options first before making a decision". "I feel" instead of "I think".

Or, "It seems to me that you are not really paying attention to what I'm saying". "It seems to me that". Now, yes, of course there are nuances, it's not exactly the same as "I think", but this is yet another way that you can use instead of just saying "I think". "It seems to me that, you know, this might not be the right decision for us".

Another phrase - "If you ask me". So I could say, "I think it's a little too soon", or I could say, "It's a little too soon, if you ask me". Or "If you ask me, it's a little too soon".

"As far as I can tell" - that's another way to say "I think". "I think that no one will forget this time". "As far as I can tell, no one will ever forget this time". "As far as I can tell".

"To me, things really need to change". "To me ..." "I think" - "I think, things really need to change here". "I think, things really need to change here". "To me, things really need to change here". So you can also say that.

The next word is "Hard". This word pops up really easily whenever we experience this emotion, or we want to use this word. But if you don't want to use "hard", and "hard" is also a harsh word, then in some situations or in some context - and it's very direct - so you could use other words. Like "challenging".

It doesn't have the same connotations. And also, that's another word, a fancier word, for the word "hard". "It's a really challenging project". "It's been really challenging for me lately". Instead of, "It's been really hard for me lately".

Now I'm not saying you can't use "hard", but if you want to have that extra edge, or you feel frustrated with the fact that that's the word that you go back to every time you want to express something with that idea, then these are your options.

"It's tough". Right? "Things are tough right now". "It's not that simple, or "it's not so simple", or "it's not so easy" - that's another way to say "hard", but in a different way. Okay? So,

yeah, you're not using fancy words here, but it's just another way of expressing something that is immediate, that we constantly use and constantly express. Right.

"It's tricky". "I don't know, the situation is really tricky". Instead of "hard", right. "It's a tricky situation". "It's a tricky decision". So it takes the edge off of it. So if something is really hard, oh, use "hard". But "tricky" is a little more subtle, so you might want to use that.

That's the thing about English and about becoming fluent, and about enhancing your vocabulary. A lot of times we look for those really nice, fancy words, those big words. And that's great too, and I'm probably going to add those in this video series.

But I want to tell you sometimes the basic words that we use can be polished a little bit. And we could use different variations for each word because these are very, very frequent words, and we don't want to get repetitive for ourselves.

The next word is "happy". What a great word! We don't want to delete this word from our vocabulary, not at all. So, sometimes if we want to be a bit more expressive, we could just add an adjective to it. "I'm genuinely happy for you". Or "I'm so incredibly happy for you". Right? So we can upgrade it a little bit by adding an adverb that supports it and enhances it. And we can also use other words like, "I'm thrilled". "I'm thrilled to be here". I actually love the word "thrilled". Because I know for some of you it may sound a little over the top, but in American English it is frequently used. Like you don't have to be, "Aaa, my God, I'm so thrilled!" to use this word. Right?

"I'm thrilled to be here with you". That's cool too. Right? Instead of saying, "I'm happy to be here with you". So don't feel like you're turning it into like a really, really excited teenager when you use the word "thrilled".

And if you go to 'YouGlish', for example, you will see how often it is being used in videos. If you don't know YouGlish, you should, I'm going to put a link to it in the description as well. Another word you could use is "excited". Again, it's not exactly the same, but it's another way of expressing something, like happy about something or excited about something. And yes, "excited" is also a little overused, but if you don't use it that much, then you can definitely start using it more.

"I agree". If you want to agree with something, you could say "Yes", or "I agree", or "Sure". So these are the basic words that we use to show agreement with someone. But here are a few more options. "Absolutely". "Definitely". "Oh, I definitely agree with you". You can even still use the word "agree", but you added something to it. That's the upgrade I'm talking about. Then you feel a bit more expressive.

Yeah, so it's not yet you using academic language. Okay? But, is that really the goal? You

want to be conversational. And you will notice that great speakers, they don't use fancy words. They don't use words other people don't understand, or words that are rarely used in the language.

Because when you use that in speaking, it feels like you're a little stuck up or maybe patronizing. It feels like you're positioning yourself above others. So, the purpose is not to find those fancy 10-syllable words, just like something that is a little different.

"A hundred percent". Or, "hundred percent". I love that. "A hundred percent". It's like, that's it, that's enough, you don't have to say much if you really agree with someone. "I was just thinking the same thing". Or, "My thoughts exactly". Or, "I feel that way too". All of them express "I agree".

"Important". That's a word that we use a lot. For example, "It's important that you remember that you need to practice these words at home before you use it in a conversation". "It's crucial that you practice these words at home first".

"It's essential for you to practice these words at home first". "It's imperative that you learn the pronunciation of these words first before you try to use them in a sentence". Crucial. Essential. So these are a few examples of how you can upgrade the word "important".

The word "worried". "I'm worried that we're not going to be there on time". Right. An easy word to tap into. And the state that I am constantly in. "I'm worried that we're not going to be there on time".

"I'm concerned that we're not going to be there on time". "I'm concerned". Or "I'm afraid that we're not going to be there on time". So, two more words to use instead of the word "worried".

"I want". This is such a great word. It's a primal word, we use it all of the time. You do not want to delete it from your vocabulary. We want to use it. Want, want, want. I just said want like 5 billion times. But here are two other ways to say "I want", just to make it more interesting. "I want".

"I feel like". Instead of, "I want to get some coffee" - "I feel like getting some coffee. Or "I feel like drinking some coffee". Right? "I feel like".

Or, "I would love to", "I'd love to go home after this". Instead of, "I really want to go home after this". So, instead of adding the word "really want" - "I'd love to".

The word "good". "Good" is a great word, but what if we say "valuable" instead, right? It doesn't really change the meaning. It's just, it makes it a bit more varied. Maybe a little more sophisticated. I don't know why I always go to like that British annunciation, when I say the word "sophisticated".

Instead of, “It’s a good idea” – “It’s a valuable idea”. “It’s a helpful idea”. “It’s an exceptional idea”, if you want to say something that is really good, right? “It’s a helpful feature”. “It’s worthwhile”. So these are just a few other words to use, instead of just saying that something is good.

Now, what is the best way to start using those words in conversation or freely? So here’s how I see it. First of all, all the words, all the other words that I suggested are not challenging words either to pronounce or to remember. These are not like long words, or they’re not that rare in the conversation or in the language.

So, the thing is that you just need to use it a lot. What I recommend is to take one substitution for each word, and just one, don’t overdo it. This is why I didn’t give you an a list of 6-7 different synonyms. I mean, for that you can go to the dictionary and look for it.

I gave you common words that I know would not be too challenging to say, and that will make it easy for you to use them. So choose one word or one substitution that maybe you use, but you don’t use that often – or maybe you don’t use at all – and write it down.

So now you have a list of 8 words. Then I want you to say each of those new words out loud, like 5-6-10 times. If you’re not sure about the pronunciation, then Google it and come back and say it. Make sure you know exactly how to pronounce each syllable. And if one part is exceptionally challenging – instead of, “really hard” – have you noticed what we just did here? So if one part is exceptionally challenging, then you want to repeat that part again and again and again and again. Okay?

So that is about developing the muscle memory of saying that word. Because your mouth is not used to sing it that much. So you want to practice just saying it out of context. Then you want to use it in context.

Because you know the context in which this word should be used, then I want you to just create 5-6 sentences for each of those words, and use it and say it out loud. Do not think it in your head. You can’t practice English in your head. You just can’t. It’s not going to be the same. It will be helpful, but it’s not going to be half as helpful as saying it out loud.

Because we really discover the challenges when we say it out loud. We discover when we get stuck, we discover when something’s not working, when something does not sound right. This is why I want you to say it out loud in context, like I did. “It’s imperative that you pay attention to the small details”. “It’s crucial that you follow your morning routine”. So on and so forth.

So, for each word – and remember, just choose one for now, please, just choose one. I know you, you want to get it all down and you want to practice everything. Choose one, but that

one word, drill it in 5-6 different sentences.

The next step is to choose 3 words out of the 8, and use them consciously and deliberately in a conversation. So you are aware of them and you try to use them because again, these are very, very common words. So you are very likely to end up using a few of them in almost every conversation.

If you don't have a lot of opportunities to speak in English, then I invite you to join our community on Facebook. I will put a link to it in the description. Because there you'll get a ton of opportunities to speak, and it's totally free. We have weekly discussions where we encourage you to post a video answering one of the questions that we post.

We have weekly activities and most importantly, we have group conversations. It's called the Speaking Club, it's on Zoom, we break into small groups. So you have the opportunity of speaking with 3-4 different people. And we have like 4 speaking clubs a week.

And again, it's totally free, just for you, a great opportunity to practice. So I highly encourage you to come and join us. Only with the best intentions, only with being fully supportive. And don't forget to answer the questions at the beginning cause we do not approve people who don't answer the questions. Just so you know.

Okay. That's it. Thank you so much for watching. If you have more ideas for word upgrades, for the words that I've shared with you in this video - let us know in the comments below.

And if you haven't yet - subscribe to my channel, and subscribe to the notifications so you get notified when I release a new video, that is aimed at helping you feeling freaking awesome about your English. Yeah, I said 'freaking awesome' instead of 'good' because it is freaking awesome.

Have a beautiful week. Stay healthy, stay safe, and I'll see you next week in the next video. Bye.