

# BEST ENGLISH HACKS – LANGUAGE STRATEGIES



Arbetsblad

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**Upphovsrätten till innehållet** i det här arbetsbladet tillkommer UR, om inte något annat särskilt anges. Arbetsbladet får endast kopieras, distribueras digitalt och visas i undervisningssammanhang.

## Language strategies

Language strategies is all about finding a good way to solve problems that works for **you**. If you learn your new English words best by singing them at the top of your lungs, then do so. If you need to write them, do that. Or if you prefer to talk to others, then choose that way.

Use the different language strategies with a friend or a group of friends. Below, you will find a few different activities to try out. Use an open mind when you try them out and evaluate what you think afterwards.

- Which ones are fun to do?
- Which ones do you think could be useful to **you**?
- Which ones might even be embarrassing?

### Talk with your hands

Make a list of five simple words (e.g. things in the classroom, or different things you can eat and so on). Don't show your list to your friend(s) and then take turns to try to explain the word with gestures alone. Examples of words you could try to explain:

soft  
hungry  
pencil  
coffee  
puppy  
school bag  
bookshelf  
fever  
sunshine

### Mirroring

Talk to each other about *anything* (what you did after school yesterday, your favourite sport, a film you have watched) and when it's your turn, repeat a part of what the other one just said:

A: - ... and that's what I thought was really exciting in the film.

B: - So that's what you thought was really exciting in the film. I also liked...

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Listen carefully to someone saying a sentence in English. You can use a film that you pause, the sound files to your English textbook, an audiobook or something similar. Then try to imitate how the person says that. If you want to get more advanced, you can even record yourself and listen back to hear if you get it right.

### Talk around it

Play "Hot Chair" in class. Create two teams that will compete against each other. Take turns to send one person to the "Hot Chair", where he/she will sit with the back against the whiteboard. There, the teacher or a member from the opposite team will write a word. If the other members from the team can describe the word (without saying it, of course) so well that the person in the chair says it, the team get a point. For higher difficulty, you get a time limit.

Work in pairs and decide what you are going to talk about. Then give each other a "forbidden" word that he/she can't use. For instance, if you talk about the latest Spiderman film, one of you might not be allowed to say "spider" and the other one is not allowed to say "web". Instead, you need to describe that with other words each time you would come across it.

A: - And then this...eight-legged creepy crawly man... jumped from house to house.

B: - Yeah, and he shot.... threads that created a net... to catch the bad guy.

### Ask questions

Just like in mirroring, you talk to each other about *anything* (what you did after school yesterday, your favourite sport, a film you have watched) and when it's your turn, you give a follow-up question.

*A: - ... and that's what I thought was really exciting in the film.*

*B: - Have you seen anything like that before?*

OR

*- How did that make you feel?*

OR

*- Could you explain that a bit more?*

*A: - I live with my Mum and my Dad.*

*B: - How old are your parents?*

OR

*- What are they called?*

OR

*- Don't you have any brothers or sisters?*

The key thing to making this work is that you really listen to what your friends are talking about. With some practise asking questions will come easily to you.

### No shame in the game

Take all the opportunities you can get to use your English. The more you practise, the better you will get. Making mistakes is part of learning, so embrace them and laugh at yourself, but don't ever let fear of errors stop you!

- Have an “English afternoon” with a friend, when you only use English and pretend not to know any other language.
- Pretend that you are a celebrity and interview your own reflection in the mirror.
- Use a mirror and practise any homework you might have (anything from new words to presentations). Smile, nod and give your reflection positive feedback – your brain will register this, and your confidence will grow.

### Filler words

Many of you probably use the word “like” as a filler word. It’s one of those words, however that can be used too much. Try using any of these words instead:

well  
actually  
basically  
totally  
literally  
clearly  
you see  
you know  
I mean  
you know what I mean  
at the end of the day  
believe me  
I guess  
I suppose  
right

Talk freely, use a dialogue from your textbook or write your own script and try to put in these filler words instead of like.

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Listen to the podcast about Amy in the UR-series “It’s Complicated”. She clearly uses the filler word “like” a lot.

- Listen and count how many times she says “like”. Discuss if you think it is too much or if it sounds okay.
- Work with the script and delete the “likes” or replace them with other filler words.

### Use your own language

Pick a topic, e.g. feelings. Share a document in class and write down all the words you know that could describe this topic. Create different columns or a table in which you write words in all the different languages you know in your class. It could be your mother tongue or the modern language you learn at school. Try to see if there are words that are similar between English and other languages. Mark these and talk about the results in class. Is it a good idea to use your own language or is it just a waste of time?

False friends are words that look and sound like the same thing in two different languages, but as it turns out, they have totally different meanings. Have a look at the words below and work with them like in the example.

English word	Swedish “false friend”	Real meaning of the English word	Write the word in a sentence.
cock	kock	tupp	There is a <b>cock</b> in the hen yard.
kiss	kiss		
fabric	fabrik		
chef	chef		
will	vill		
grind	grind		
wink	vinka		
semester	semester		
vicar	vikarie		
stool	stol		
delicate	delikat		
blanket	blankett		
wrist	vrist		
eventually	eventuellt		
smell	smälla		
gift	gift		
novel	novell		
offer	offer		

Try to learn false friends as you come across them. Then use the English words (with the real meanings, of course) as often as you can so you remember them properly.

## **Make it fun**

You will never learn anything as well as you do when you are also having fun. Therefore, combine things that you like with learning English. Only your own imagination sets the boundaries.

### **Films**

Watch films with English subtitles instead of the Swedish. That way, you will hear and read at the same time and learn twice as well.

### **Music:**

Find the lyrics to your favourite songs and read them through. Maybe they are actually singing other words than you thought? After that, sing along! You can also find and remember useful phrases from songs and use them in texts that you write in school. Just be careful that you don't use so much that it turns into a full quote and you need to add it as a source.

### **Social media**

You probably know more about fun social medias than your teacher does. However, try to expand your social media world into also including English. Follow your favourite artist or athlete? Write a nice comment in English if they have posted something. If you are a blogger, have you tried blogging in English?

### **Games**

Your teachers and parents might think that you play too many games. But you can also learn a lot of English by playing some games. Just remember that the vocabulary in a game is often quite limited. Just because you excel at a certain game, doesn't mean that you don't have to learn things in class too.

### **Reading**

Remember that reading can mean a lot of different things. It doesn't have to mean reading a very thick novel. It could improve your English even more if you read about stuff that really interest you, like articles about a sport, fashion blogs, politics, celebrities... And don't forget that if you are not keen on reading, it can be a good start to listen to the text as well.