

Sound Natural in English

the six swaps to natural speech

EPISODE 5 • LEVEL B1-B2

Episode summary

- The textbook trap: textbooks teach correct English, but correct is not the same as natural. Real people are casual, short, and warm.
- Swap one — real greetings: "Hey, how's it going?" beats "Greetings. How do you do?" Answer with "I'm good," not "I am fine, thank you."
- Swap two — contractions, always: "I'm," "don't," "I'll." The single biggest change you can make. Full forms are for writing.
- Swaps three and four — short, simple words ("buy" beats "purchase") and fillers as seasoning, not soup ("well," "you know").
- Swaps five and six — collocations in pairs ("make a mistake," not "do a mistake") and friendly connectors ("by the way," not "moreover").
- Match your formality to the moment, let your voice go up and down like music, and add slang last — only from listening.

What's inside this PDF

20 key words • the 6 swaps • Say It Better upgrades • 3 practice exercises

Key Vocabulary

20 words from this episode — learn them, then use them this week

1. natural

the way people really speak.

> His English sounds natural because he copies real conversations.

2. textbook

formal, book-style English.

> "Greetings, how do you do?" is pure textbook.

3. contraction

a short form like "I'm" or "don't."

> Use contractions — "I'll" sounds warmer than "I will."

4. filler

a small word like "well" that fills thinking time.

> "Well, let me think about it" sounds natural.

5. collocation

words that always travel together.

> Learn "take a shower," not "do a shower."

6. connector

a word that links ideas, like "anyway."

> Use "anyway" to move the conversation forward.

7. rhythm

the music of speech — your voice going up and down.

> Copy the rhythm and you sound natural.

8. casual

relaxed and informal.

11. chunk

a group of words learned as one piece.

> Learn "I can't make it" as one chunk.

12. formality

how formal or casual your words are.

> Match your formality to the situation.

13. stress

emphasis on the important word.

> Stress "can't" in "I can't make it."

14. intonation

how your voice rises and falls.

> Good intonation shows excitement and meaning.

15. swap

an exchange — one thing for another.

> Swap "moreover" for "by the way."

16. slang

very casual words used with friends.

> Learn slang last, by listening first.

17. upgrade

a change that makes something better.

> Ten upgrades from stiff to

18. human

Speak Like a Human

6 phrases that sound instantly natural + the Say It Better upgrades

6 phrases that sound instantly natural

"Hey, how's it going?"

Replaces "Greetings. How do you do?" Short, warm, real.

"I'm good, thanks."

Replaces "I am fine, thank you." Contraction + short answer.

"Got it."

Replaces "I understand." Two syllables, endless uses.

"That makes sense."

Replaces "I understand your explanation." Shows you followed.

"Sounds good."

Replaces "I agree with your proposal." Friendly agreement.

"I can't make it."

Replaces "I am sorry, I cannot attend." The natural way to miss an event.

Say It Better — 10 upgrades

X "Greetings. How do you do?"

✓ "Hey, how's it going?"

X "I am fine, thank you."

✓ "I'm good, thanks."

X "I do not know."

✓ "I don't know" — or "No idea."

X "I desire to purchase a car."

✓ "I want to buy a car."

X "Please wait a moment."

✓ "Hold on a sec."

X "I am very tired."

✓ "I'm exhausted."

X "Moreover, I agree with you."

✓ "Actually, I agree with you."

X "I have to go now."

✓ "I gotta run."

X "I understand."

✓ "Got it."

X "Thank you very much."

✓ "Thanks a lot."

Practice Time

3 exercises — do them today, not "someday"

Exercise 1 — Fill in the blank

Word bank: contraction • filler • collocation • casual • rhythm • swap

1. "I'm" is a _____ of "I am."
2. "Well" and "you know" are _____s — seasoning, not soup.
3. "Make a mistake" is a _____ — learn it as one piece.
4. "Hey, what's up?" is _____ and friendly.
5. Copy the _____ of speakers you like — the music, not just the words.

Exercise 2 — Upgrade it

1. "I am sorry, I cannot come tonight." > Say it naturally:
2. "Please wait a moment." > Two words:
3. "I understand your explanation." > Three words:

Exercise 3 — The five-phrase day

Use all five tiny phrases today: "Got it." — "No idea." — "That makes sense." — "Sounds good." — "I'm on my way." Count how many times each one leaves your mouth.

Answer key

Ex 1: 1 contraction • 2 fillers • 3 collocation • 4 casual • 5 rhythm

Ex 2: 1 "Sorry, I can't make it." • 2 "Hold on." • 3 "That makes sense."