

Understand Fast English

turn the blur into meaning

EPISODE 6 • LEVEL B1-B2

Episode summary

- Your ear is not broken — it is untrained. Fast English melts words together: "What are you doing?" becomes "Whatcha doing?"
- Connected speech: reductions ("gonna," "wanna," "dunno"), linking ("not-at-all"), and tiny grammar words that almost vanish.
- Tip one: listen for meaning, not every word. Sixty percent of the words usually gives you one hundred percent of the message.
- Tip two: repeat the same audio three times — idea, then details, then shadow. Tip three: English subtitles on the second listen only.
- Tip four: hear in thought groups, not word by word. Tip five: predict from context — good listeners guess what comes next.
- The panic rule: let the lost word go and stay with the speaker. Asking for clarification is a skill: "Could you say that more slowly?"

What's inside this PDF

20 key words • 6 clarification phrases • Say It Better upgrades • 3 practice exercises

Key Vocabulary

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

1. blur

when fast speech sounds like one unclear sound.

> Fast English was a blur until she learned the patterns.

2. chunk

words you hear as one idea.

> Listen in chunks, not word by word.

3. reduction

a shortened word, like "gonna."

> "Wanna" is a reduction of "want to."

4. predict

to guess what comes next.

> Good listeners predict from context.

5. subtitle

written text under a video.

> Use English subtitles on the second listen.

6. context

the situation around the words.

> The context told her the topic was food.

7. active

listening with full attention and a job.

> Active listening beats background listening.

8. shadow

speaking along with a speaker.

> Shadow two sentences a day.

9. gonna

reduction of "going to"

11. linking

joining words into one smooth sound.

> "Not at all" links into "not-at-all."

12. thought group

words that form one idea.

> "When I arrived" is one thought group.

13. meaning

the message, not the single words.

> Listen for meaning, not every word.

14. detective

the listening job: hunt for one thing.

> Be a detective: find every day of the week.

15. parrot

the listening job: copy the rhythm.

> Be a parrot: shadow one sentence.

16. reporter

the listening job: report the main idea.

> Be a reporter: say the idea in one sentence.

17. sweet spot

the perfect difficulty level.

> Seventy percent understanding is the sweet spot.

18. spiral

panic that grows and grows.

> One missed word starts the

Train Your Ear

6 clarification phrases + the Say It Better upgrades

6 phrases that keep you in the conversation

"Sorry, I didn't catch that last part."

Better than freezing and nodding. Specific and polite.

"Could you say that a little more slowly, please?"

Controls the speed. A skill, not a weakness.

"Did you mean Tuesday or Thursday?"

Specific beats general. Shows you were listening.

"Let me check — you said three?"

Repeat the key detail back. Professionals do this daily.

"Could you repeat the time, please?"

Ask for the exact piece you missed, not the whole thing.

"My ear is still training."

Proud, not ashamed. It trains every single day.

Say It Better — 10 upgrades

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| ✗ Freeze and nod. | ✓ "Sorry, I didn't catch that last part." |
| ✗ "What? What? What?" | ✓ "Could you say that a little more slowly, please?" |
| ✗ Pretend you understood. | ✓ "Let me check — did you mean Tuesday?" |
| ✗ Translate every word in your head. | ✓ Listen for the big meaning words. |
| ✗ Listen to three new clips. | ✓ Repeat one clip three times. |
| ✗ Subtitles in your first language. | ✓ English subtitles on the second listen. |
| ✗ Chase the lost word. | ✓ Let it go and stay with the speaker. |
| ✗ Listen word by word. | ✓ Listen in thought groups. |
| ✗ Guess blindly. | ✓ Predict from context. |
| ✗ "My English is too bad." | ✓ "My ear is still training — and it trains every day." |

Practice Time

3 exercises — do them today, not "someday"

Exercise 1 — Fill in the blank

Word bank: blur • reduction • predict • subtitle • chunk • shadow

1. "Gonna" is a _____ of "going to."
2. Fast speech sounded like a _____ until she learned the patterns.
3. Listen in _____s, not word by word.
4. Use an English _____ on the second listen.
5. _____ two sentences a day and your ear gets faster.

Exercise 2 — The skilled listener

1. You miss one word and panic. > What is the rule?
2. You need the speaker to slow down. > Say it politely:
3. You heard "whatcha." > What three words is it?

Exercise 3 — Five minutes today

Pick one short clip you understand about seventy percent of. Listen once with no subtitles, once with English subtitles, once with no subtitles while you shadow two sentences. Detective, parrot, reporter — give your ear a job.

Answer key

Ex 1: 1 reduction • 2 blur • 3 chunks • 4 subtitle • 5 Shadow

Ex 2: 1 Let the word go; stay with the speaker. • 2 "Could you say that a little more slowly, please?" • 3 "what are you"