



Make sure your reading, listening, fluency, writing, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation are at similar levels.

## Better Learning: Balance Your English

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Your English is as strong as your weakest area. Reading might be advanced but if your listening is intermediate the overall level will be...intermediate! We need several skills to use a language and they should all be at approximately the same rank.

*Do you feel you're stuck with your English? Do you study but do not learn? Lack of balance could be the problem. Take a step back, analyse what you know and get your teacher to work only on your weak areas. Your learning will improve immediately.*

For example, if our grammar is weaker than our fluency our phrases might be too simple to transmit complex ideas. If our pronunciation is stronger than our listening we will face conversation problems when we don't understand what people say.

We tend to be good at what we enjoy or what we have been taught properly in the past. If you had a teacher who thought vocabulary was important you'll surely know many words.

Fixing imbalances is not hard but it needs a diagnosis and a strict plan that focuses on our weak areas. In general, books and traditional lessons will not help. We'll also need a disciplined teacher because everyone likes to work on the areas they enjoy—which are probably also the ones they are good at. What about our imbalance then? How to solve that?

1. Find out what your strong and weak areas are by asking your teacher or taking a test.
2. Work on your weak areas until they are as good as your strong areas.
3. Return to traditional lessons once your reading, listening, fluency, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation are at the same level.

Andrew's advice: it only takes a short time to analyse your English so sit with your teacher and do it now!

*An unbalanced learner is excellent in some areas and weak in others. For example, someone who learnt English speaking while on holiday might have good conversation but weak grammar; alternatively, people who learned English at school could be able to write perfect sentences but have problems when they speak.*

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