

The English Language

form 7

Give a 5 minute talk on the English language. Remember to say:

- about some facts from the history of the English language
- why English has become the global language of the world
- what English-speaking countries you know
- about modern changes in the English language
- about different ways of learning English
- about your personal reasons to learn English

Some facts from the history of the English language

When Julius Caesar landed in Britain nearly two thousand years ago, English did not exist. Five hundred years later, in the 5th century, English was already spoken by the people who inhabited Great Britain but they were not many, and their English was not the language we know today. Nearly a thousand years later, at the end of the 16th century, when William Shakespeare created his works, English was the native language of about 6 million Englishmen. At that time English was not used anywhere else except Great Britain. Nowadays 750 million people all over the world use English, and half of those speak it as a mother tongue. English has become the language of the planet, the first truly global language.

Why English has become the global language of the world

Firstly, 750 million people all over the world use English, and half of those speak it as a mother tongue. Secondly, of all the 2700 world languages English is one of the richest. It has a vocabulary of about 500 000 words. Moreover, English is the language of computers, science, business and politics. It is one of the six official languages of the United Nation and the official voice of air and sea. Three quarters of the world's mail and its telexes and telegrams are in English. More than half of the world's scientific periodicals and eighty percent of the information in the world's computers are also in English. In addition, English is the language of sports: the official language of the Olympics.

What English - speaking countries you know

Modern English is spoken in many countries around the world. There are about 400 million native English speakers in the world.

Countries where English is the national language or the native language of majority are the UK (its capital is London), the USA (its capital is Washington, DC), Canada (its capital is Ottawa), Australia (its capital is Canberra), New Zealand (its capital is Wellington).

English-speaking countries are situated in different parts of the world.

In 1949 Britain and former colonies founded the Commonwealth. Nowadays the Commonwealth includes 54 countries such as: Ireland and Malta in Europe; Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe in Africa; Jamaica in Caribbean; Singapore, Pakistan, India, Philippines in Asia and other countries.

Modern changes in the English language

English is and has always been constantly changing. Some words die, some change their meanings and all the time new words appear in the language. In modern English there are many words that were borrowed from Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch and other languages. When Columbus came back from South America he brought home to Spain new plants: potatoes, tomatoes and tobacco. With the plants he brought their names. This is how these words appeared in Spanish and later were borrowed from it by the English language. The words that are borrowed tell us about the countries they have come from. For example, many Italian words that are now part of English (opera, operetta, piano) have to do with music. Many of the words that people borrow from other languages are names of food. For example, sushi, spaghetti, pasta.

About different ways of learning English

Nowadays many people all over the world speak English and learn it in different ways. To master the language and then keep it up they do some things. For example, people have grammar and vocabulary drills in English, they sing songs and play games in English, read books, newspapers, magazines and other periodicals in English, watch videos and educational programmes.

I do many different things to learn English. Firstly, I find reading books, magazines and other periodicals very helpful. I try to guess the meaning of words I don't know from the context. This helps me to read more quickly.

Secondly, I practise the vocabulary together with the grammar. I remember the words better if they are related to my interests. Also it is important to listen to the radio and watch videos and educational programmes in English. It helps to pronounce words correctly with right intonation. Moreover, I learn both formal and informal English because I want to know how to ask for information, how to be polite. Besides, it is a bright idea to communicate with native speakers online and use the Internet resources such as Skype, Facebook, ICQ to improve English.

About your personal reasons to learn English

I'd like to say that I have a lot of reasons to learn English. To start with English has become the international language, the language of computers, science, business and politics. To know English today is absolutely necessary for every educated person, for every good specialist. Knowing a language opens doors to visiting different countries and helps to communicate, to understand and to be understood by the people. Also English develops our mind. Furthermore, I think English will help me in my future job.

The next reason is I like travelling very much. Speaking English I can travel everywhere, talk to people from different countries and understand their culture and traditions. There are also international friendship camps both in Russia and abroad. It will be easy for me to visit such camps and speak English with boys and girls who do not know Russian.

Besides, I learn English because I want to read books of the great English and American writers in the original. I want to watch different films, satellite TV programmes and listen to my favourite songs in English. In addition, I learn English because I'd like to communicate with a native speaker online.