

Doing English

"LKC Seminar for medical people"

Julian: English. Are you ready?

Class: Yes.

Julian: What time, what time did you start today?

Female Student: 9:00.

Julian: 9:00, class you must be very tired already. Very tired already and now, you get to listen to me in English for one hour. So maybe at 2:00, maybe you'll be very tired. But it's okay. To make it easier, I have prepared a cheat sheet, so even if you are too sleepy, don't want to listen, can't understand, just fall asleep, it's okay. Cause you can check, just check the notes and everything is on here. Summer in Tokyo is very hot. So in the summer I just sleep all summer, that's it. Today it's very rare, it's very rare that I leave the house in summer, so, you're very lucky. Anyway, so first of all. Thank you to Ms. Hyosung for inviting me here today.

Ms. Hyosung: No, thank you.

Julian: Thank you, thank you. So. Do you know who I am? That's a good question. That's a good question. Normally I talk to people who already know me from YouTube or from the internet, so this is the first time. My name, my name is Julian Northbrook. I am from the UK but I've been in Japan for what, 11 years now. I speak English, of course, English is my first language. I speak Japanese as a second language. And importantly, for today, I don't speak French... At all. I, you probably studied English at junior high school, maybe high school, university, whatever, in Japan. You studied English. Well, I lived in the UK, grew up in the UK, so we studied French. Five years, British junior high school, junior high school in England is five years. Different to Japan, Japan is three years, England is five years. I studied French for five years and I can say, in French, Je ne parle pas français, I don't understand French. Finished. Pointless. Five years, five years and I can say I don't speak french. I don't understand French. French classes in the UK, may be very similar to Japanese junior high school English classes. We have a textbook, we studied grammar rules. We memorized grammar rules, determiner plus noun plus adjective, you can make

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the sentence. But I couldn't make the sentence at all. And when in my third year of junior high school I went on a homestay. I went to France and I stayed with a French family for our homestay. I couldn't speak a word of French. Couldn't speak French, didn't understand French, had no idea what was going on. Luckily for me, my host mother was really good at English. And here was me, I was a terrible, terrible, terrible, student, I didn't study, I didn't do my homework, I didn't like French. I went on a homestay because I thought, great. Two weeks holiday. Two weeks off school, no classes. So, I went for a bad reason, didn't speak French. I didn't understand French. My host mother spoke English, great. No problem. So my host mother thinks, who is this British guy? He's either lazy or he's stupid, or both. I don't know, but very quickly she realized, I wasn't going to speak French. So she spoke English. She spoke very good English. But, over the two weeks, I started to notice, although she spoke very fluent English, English that was very easy to understand, it was kind of strange. It wasn't the same as the English that we spoke in England. It wasn't the words. The words were fine. Her grammar was fine. Pronunciation, no problem. I couldn't understand what, what is wrong, what is strange about her English? And I never, I never understood, at that time, why her English was different, until, how many years later? Six years later when I came here. I came to Japan. I came to Japan on a working holiday. I didn't plan to live here. I lived in the UK. I went to university. Graduated university. Didn't know what to do so I thought, okay, I'll go to Japan, working holiday. Spent a year in Japan. I didn't speak Japanese when I came here, so I got a job teaching English. And again, I started to notice that my students, even though they spoke great English, their English was different. Not the same to British people. Then I met people from America. From Canada, from all over the world. And I noticed again that these people in America, the way they speak English is different to the way that we speak English in the UK. And this really interested me. I kind of thought, what is it, what is different? And then one day I realized that the big difference was not the words, was not the phrases, the pronunciation, the grammar, but the culture. Not the language, but what happens in here. The way that we think. When I did the French homestay, my homestay mother was an excellent English speaker but she was a French thinker. Her thinking was based on French culture, French values, French ideals, the French way of living life. When I came to Japan, here it's the same. You're all Japanese I think. Your values are based on Japanese values, Japanese culture, Japanese knowledge and that is different to the way to the way that we use English or think in the UK, in America, say, in India, the Philippines, wherever in the world you go, we all think in a different way. So to put things simply, in order to speak a language well, in order to speak a language effectively, in an international situation, just having language is not enough. Just knowing words, vocabulary, grammar, phrases, is not enough, you need more than that. In fact, you need three things to speak a language well. This is something that I call the LKC triangle. And incidentally, it's what my book is all about. You can't buy this book

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because this is the only copy that exists. You know why. I have many, many problems printing and publishing this book. So, what I'm talking about here, today, is kind of a summary. A very short summary of everything from here. So, you need three things to speak a language well. First of all you need language. And the example I give here is of going to a bike shop. Let's have a show of hands. Does anybody cycle? Is anybody like an enthusiastic cyclist? Anybody do it professionally, no? No? Several months ago, no, more months ago, a year ago now, a year and a half ago now, my bicycle that I had been riding for five, six years, broke. I banged the front wheel into the side of the wall and it bent, and that was it, finished. I took it to the bike shop and I said, can you fix this for me? And they said, mmm, no. It'll cost more money to fix than you paid for the bike. So you should just buy a new bike. So I thought, okay, it's time, time to buy a new bicycle. And, whoa is from Tokyo? Let's have a show of hands again, who is from Tokyo? Only one person? Ah, two people. Is anybody familiar with the area, Yanaka? Ni Nishi Nippori. About 10, 15 minutes walk from Nishi Nippori station. Yanaka is my favorite part of Tokyo. It's a very interesting area. Lot's a very old traditional buildings that they kept, that survived. They've restored them, and it's a very beautiful area. And in Yanaka, there's a bike shop called Tokyo Bike that looks really cool on the outside. So, I walked past this place many, many, many times, so when I needed to buy a new bike, I thought, ah ha, I know where I'll go, I'll go to this place in Yanaka. My bike before then was just the normal mamachari type bike. Just a normal bike. I never had an expensive bike, I'd never ridden a road bike, a nice bike, so I didn't know what to expect when I went in, but I thought, eh, it's a bike, I'll go in the shop, I'll buy a bike, and I'll cycle it home. No. I go into the bike and I'm confronted with the bike shop assistant. And she says to me, hi, can I help you? Of course, the conversation is in Japanese. So, I thought, you know, it's no problem, no problem. I discussed with her, I said, I want to buy a bike, and she starts to ask me, what sort of bike, what sort of handlebars do you want, what kind of wheels do you want, what kind of frame do you want? Suddenly there were all these options and different ways to build the bike, and the discussion just got more and more and more difficult, and suddenly, I have no idea what she's talking about anymore. I thought, just buy a bike, go home, but no, actually you have to choose all the parts and they custom build it for you, and then two weeks later, you collect the bike, and then you can take it home. So, this situation was a really good illustration of this idea, of this principle. So I've used it as an example here. In order to have this discussion about the bike, I needed language. Of course, if you don't have language, if you don't have the words and the phrases, and the expressions that you need to say the things that you want to say, then you can't speak, you can't say something if you don't have the word. If I don't know that this is a bottle, I can only say, this thing. You need language, of course, but it's just the beginning. You also need knowledge, and for me in this situation, I lacked knowledge. I knew nothing about bikes. I don't know how a bike works, I don't know

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how a bike is put together. You have the straight handlebars, and then you have the handlebars that kind of curve. I don't even know what those are called. What's the difference, why are they curved, what do they do, how do you use them? When they asked me, how many gears do you need? I don't know. Gears, two, 10, 100? I don't know. I don't know, what is the difference between four gears and 12 gears? I couldn't talk about it because I didn't know about it. The lady asked me about Bradley Wiggins. Do you know who Bradley Wiggins is? No, I didn't know either. Apparently, he's a very famous British cyclist. British champion. I didn't know that. So, here's me with this Japanese shop assistant, oh yeah, Bradley Wiggins, yeah, yeah, yeah. No idea what she's talking about. I don't know. Then of course, there's the culture. People who really love cycling, it's a culture, cycling enthusiasts have their own way of talking, they have their own slang, their own phrases and expressions to talk about bikes. And of course there's the country's culture to do with cycling as well. We don't need to get into that, road laws, for example, in Japan are totally different to England. In England you can't cycle on the pavement, everybody must cycle on the road, they must wear a helmet. It's very different to Japan. It's a part of culture as well. So, that situation went quite horribly wrong, I couldn't have the conversation well, not because of language, not just because of language, but because I didn't have the knowledge that I needed, because I didn't have the understanding of the culture that I needed. So, what I'm gonna do, we're doing quite well for time, is, I'm gonna go over these points in detail now and talk about language, what kind of language you might need, how do you learn that language, what is the best kind of language to focus on to learn. Then, very briefly, I'm gonna talk about the knowledge part, because this is kind of easy for you guys, I think. And then in a little bit more detail, I'm gonna talk about culture, and hopefully I can do that in 40 minutes. We'll see. She's laughing because she knows I always talk for too long. For you guys, an hour is maybe a long time to hear me speaking English, but for me, I could talk about this for days and days and days, and never stop, and never get tired. It's kind of dangerous, kind of dangerous to let me speak. Language, how, well, I think the first most obvious question is, how much language do you need to speak English well? Native speakers actually really don't know much English. You'd be surprised at how little we know of our language. And of course, it's the same for you with Japanese as well, it's the same for all people of all languages. English has a million words, about a million words. Different researchers have different ideas, they say slightly different things, but in general, we can say English has one million words. Some very clever linguists worked out that native speakers from the time they are born, learn on average, one thousand words a year for about 25 years. So, the average native speaker, who goes to university, graduates university, at about 25, and at that point, they know about 25,000 words. It's quite a lot, sure, it's a lot of words, but actually, that's only 2.5% of the words in English. So, of all of the language in English, native speakers only know a tiny, tiny, tiny, tiny

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amount of that. Which is kind of important, because in my experience, and I was the same with Japanese, when I was learning Japanese and struggling with Japanese in the beginning, my thinking was always that if only, if only I learn more vocabulary, then I'll be able to speak better. And for a couple of years, I did this, and just, I need more vocabulary, more words, then I can express myself better. But even after I had passed the JLPT, the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, I passed it at the highest level, I memorized a lot of vocabulary to pass that test, but even then, I still couldn't speak the language well. I couldn't use all the words that I knew. It's the same with English, you probably heard the stories of people who have TOEIC scores of 880 points, like super high TOEIC scores, but they can't speak English, they can't make proper sentences, they can't understand what people say. The reason why is, because we don't need that much vocabulary. Remember, native speakers only know a tiny amount of the vocabulary in English. And of that tiny amount, most of it is an even smaller amount. We can say that there are basically three types of language. The what we call core language, the super common words and phrases and expressions that get used absolutely everywhere. Hi, hello, how are you? Excuse me, could you help me with this? Would you show me, whatever? Then we can say that there is topic specific language. For you guys, this is going to be the language of physiotherapy. The language that you would use in a conference, in a seminar, in a training session, if you were to do it in English. For me, it's the language of English education of language learning. In this situation, it was the language of bike maintenance. Words like cog, chain, saddle, handlebars. This is very useful language but only for people in this specific situation. In physiotherapy, you probably don't use the word cog that often. Or chain, how is your chain today? No, it's just, you don't use it in conversation. Then we have the third type of language which is just everything else. And you can just forget about that. It's almost everything. It is not that common, not that useful, for most people. So, you just don't need it. We'll come to how, how you actually work this out and get it in a moment. But the point that I want to make here is that very few people have a vocabulary problem. Most people already have more vocabulary than what they need. The point is not how much you have but how well you combine the words that you have to make bigger pieces of language. This is what I call chunking. A chunk is like a big fat piece of something. This is actually my area of research, of specialty. This, I did a PhD in psycholinguistics. This was what I studied and researched, was chunking. Chunking is very important and it's super important for you guys. Because when native speakers speak, we used to think that they used grammar and they used words. That's how we learn English at school. You get taught grammar rules, and you get taught add words to the grammar rules, and then you can make language. When I learned French, the first thing we were taught was nouns, things like . Animal names, the cat, the dog, the pig, that's the only one I remember of all things. And then we get told well, you've got the noun and two add an adjective to it you just add it onto the end. In English, we have

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determiner, adjective, noun. In French it's determiner, noun, adjective. Go on then, speak French. Are you confused? Determiner, adjective, noun, what? It doesn't work like that. And of course, what happens? Everybody gets it wrong. And it gets more and more complicated and people don't really know what they're doing anymore. Native speakers actually don't speak like that, most of the time. We know this because the human brain actually isn't that powerful. Well it is, we have a lot of memory, but it's like an old computer that has very little processing power. And the speed that native speakers speak, if I was to talk like this all the time, and I'm always using grammar rules and adding words, my brain would be going crazy trying to keep up. We've got this rule and we're trying to process and compute everything, it would just overheat, phew. We can't speak like that. Not only that but native speakers say things that sound natural. We never say pleasant first half of the day to you. Well in fact now it would be pleasant second half of the day to you. We don't say that, we say good morning, good afternoon. We don't say, excuse me, could you aid me in this task? We say could you help me with this? But why? Both are grammatical. Pleasant second half of the day to you is perfectly grammatical. But it sounds really, really strange. The reason is chunking. Native speakers actually store chunks of language, complete phrases, complete expressions, long, big pieces of language. We store it in memory, just like that. And then when we speak, we just, pow, pull it out. And we speak in chunks. This is why we can speak so fluently. Suddenly if I say, could you help me with this? That's six words. But actually it's not six words, it's only one. Could you help me with this? That's why we can speak fluently. And why we can speak naturally. Thank you for the water. So the point I want to make here is that for you guys, speaking English is a second language. Learning to speak English, learning to understand English. What you really want to be doing is not learning like we were taught in school. You don't really want to be learning grammar rules and vocabulary. But instead you want to learn language in the way that human beings naturally use language as chunks. Instead of learning words, you want to be learning phrases, expressions, chunks of words. Noticing the chunks that we use in every day conversation so that when you speak, you can just pull them out, as is and use them like that. This is also really important because you actually can't understand what a word means based on just the word. For example, the word cause means to make something to happen. But what you can't understand from that is that it's only used in bad situations. You cause an injury, you cause a problem, but you don't cause happiness, you don't cause someone to smile. This is because it's only used in negative chunks. It's only used in chunks like cause a problem, cause an accident. So learning in chunks helps you to understand how words are really used in context, in real life. And that's kind of the problem with the way we learn for tests and things like TOEIC and EIKEN or in my case the Japanese proficiency test, because we just learned lists of words, we don't know how they're used in context, in real life. Which brings me, very nicely to example based learning. I've kind of talked about some of

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this already. We can skip a bit of this. Anybody seen the film, Captain America: Civil War? The Marvel film. Has anybody seen it? Captain America? No. I have three children so, my kids love the super hero films and Captain America is one of them. It's a super hero film, it's, I like it actually, I like it, I pretend, I pretend I watch it for the children. Yeah, the kids want to watch this film. Actually it's me. It's me who usually wants to watch it. In that film there's a really great scene which can teach you a very important lesson about learning languages. You can see this picture here I put there for people who haven't seen it. This guy with the funny head is called Vision and he's a robot. And the girl standing next to him is called Wanda. She's a Hungarian girl. In this particular scene, I can't remember why, I forget why, but she is kind of sad. She's feeling sad. She's feeling down. She's feeling depressed. So her friend, Vision, the robot decides that he's going to cheer her up. What's the best way to cheer her up? Cooking, let's cook her something. So he says, okay, she's Hungarian, I'll cook her some traditional Hungarian food, Paprikash. Ever heard of it? Paprikash, I've never had it. It's a Hungarian dish made from paprika. Sounds great. Only remember, Vision is a robot. He doesn't eat food. He's never eaten food. He's never eaten any food, let alone Paprikash. He has no idea what food should taste like, should smell like, should even look like. So we have this robot who has never eaten food before making Paprikash. But it's okay, he has the rules. He has a recipe. He's got the recipe there and he's reading it. Okay, so we add some onions. Onions, okay, chuck them in. Pinch of paprika. Pinch. Pinch of paprika goes in. How good do you think this cooking is going to be? Good? Remember, he's never eaten food before. So, Wanda tries it and she says, oh, my God, I don't know what's in this but it's not paprikash. But of course, I mean it's obvious. A robot who has never eaten food before is not going to be able to cook it well, because he doesn't know what the final dish should look like, should taste like, should be like. This is kind of the same as the way people learn languages. And especially with the traditional grammar rules and vocabulary. And this was the problem with me learning French. La noir chat. Which is wrong in French. The cat black. We say the black cat. It all gets confused cause I don't know what French should sound like, should look like. The way we learn is kind of backwards. We tend to start with words, we memorize the words, then we memorize the grammar rules. Sometimes we start with the grammar rules, then we memorize the words, and then we're expected to produce language from this. But this is like the robot cooking food. How can we produce language properly, naturally if we have no idea what it's supposed to sound like, to be like in the end? So the way I teach is actually the other way around, it's backwards. What I call example based learning means taking examples of real language. Samples of actual conversation and instead of learning the language and trying to speak it, forget about speaking the language, instead, just look at what other people are doing and copy it. For you guys, that could be something like, say you want to help a patient and you need to do it in English, it could be something like finding training DVD's or

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training manuals, that are produced for native English speakers and using those and copying the language that you hear. When I started to teach English in Japan, I taught at a secondary school. And they asked me, can you teach in Japanese? The answer was no, I can't. Can you learn to teach in Japanese? Sure, the materials that I use to do that were actually podcasts for Japanese people learning English, but I studied the language that the teachers used to explain the English, as an example and basically copied that in my own classes. Okay. We should speed up a bit, actually. Okay, knowledge. We're gonna skip over this quite quickly. Because there really isn't that much to say. I mean put simply, you can't talk about what you don't know and you think about. That sounds kind of obvious. In the bike shop example, I didn't know about bikes, I couldn't talk about bikes. For the most part, this is not a problem for you. I mean, for example, my specialty, my research area with psycholinguistics, I could talk about psycholinguistics in English, Japanese, no problem whatsoever. I could talk about it pretty fluently, in English and in Japanese. Probably I could speak about it in Japanese better than most Japanese people, but that's because psycholinguistics is my area of specialty. Physiotherapy, I haven't got a clue. I couldn't speak about physiotherapy in Japanese, but I couldn't speak about it in English either. Because it's not my area of specialization, but it is yours. For most people, when it comes to their jobs, they can speak fairly easily. It's not really a problem. Where things start to get difficult is the small talk, chit chat. The casual situations. You have a conference in English, the conference is fine, then everybody goes out for a beer and suddenly, what are you talking about? The whole thing just breaks down and we don't know what's happening anymore. The key here is to have interesting stories to tell. We all have interesting things to talk about. We all have stories to tell. I was going to tell you a story about when I was in China, but we don't have time. I'm going to go over otherwise. But just do more, basically, the more stories you have to tell, the more interesting you tend to be. I'm going to skip over this part, I think, because I want to talk about culture. And the knowledge part is pretty easy, I think. And it's not that relevant to you, so. Culture. Culture is the big one. Culture is the difficult part. This is where things get really tricky, in my experience. When you make a mistake with your language, if I make a grammar mistake or I use the wrong word, genuinely people don't actually care that much. I mean native speakers make mistakes all the time, with their own language. We really don't care that much about pronunciation mistakes or grammar mistakes. Cultural mistakes on the other hand are quite different. Cultural mistakes are where people get upset. Cultural mistakes are what start war. Understanding people's culture, I believe is the most important part of learning a language and using a language well. What is culture? Culture is very, very complicated. In one way it's very simple. But in another way it's very complicated. If you imagine like a pair of glasses that have pink lenses. I put these glasses on and suddenly the whole world turns pink. The world looks hot and passionate and romantic. And then I take the pink glasses off and I

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changed them for a blue pair. Suddenly the world looks very different. It's the same world. I'm looking at the same people, in the same place but now they look cold, icy, maybe a little bit depressed. Like Picasso's blue paintings. Again, same world, very different ways of looking. I call these glasses with the colored lenses your culture glasses. The only difference is, is that the culture glasses that you are wearing now were put on when you were born. And you can never take them off. You can try to take them off and you can change them, but you can never completely remove them. Basically, everything that you say, when you speak English, you say it through your own culture, through your own understanding, with your own cultural glasses. But when I hear what you've said, I understand it not with your culture but with my culture. And this is where communication breakdowns tend to happen. Because you say one thing meaning one thing, I understand it in a totally different way. I mean, humor, humor is the perfect example. If you've ever tried to make a joke in English, it probably doesn't work. I remember when I was first in Japan. I was working at a secondary school, and I was walking to work one morning with an umbrella. It was pouring down with rain outside. It was horrible. It was wet and it was cold. The weather was terrible. One of the teachers was stood by the gates at the school and I said in Japanese, good morning, lovely weather today. She looked at me just like, what? What are you talking about? Lovely weather. Just then another teacher came past and, oh, hi, hi, hi. And thankfully for her she had an excuse not to talk to me anymore. But I felt very embarrassed. Because I realized, eh, this humor doesn't translate well. In the UK however, that's how we speak. British people are very ironic, quite sarcastic. When it's sunny outside, we complain. Oh, the weather's too hot, it's terrible today. When it's cold and wet outside, we say, oh wow, the weather's amazing today. Everything is said ironically, with a kind of backwards meaning. That doesn't translate well into Japanese. Because we have different culture glasses. When I said it, I said it understanding that I'm saying it in an ironic humorous way, the weather is terrible today so I'll say it's great today. It doesn't make any sense if you don't know though. And to the teacher I spoke to, it didn't make any sense. Humor is hard. Humor doesn't translate well. But it's not just humor, it goes much, much, much deeper than that. What we think of as common knowledge, *jōshiki*, common sense, actually isn't common at all. Because actually your common knowledge is totally different to my common knowledge. For example, in Japan, it took me a very long time to get used to the fact that Japanese people go to the doctor's very often. You catch a cold, got a sore throat, go to the doctor. The doctor greets me with a smile. Ah, you've got a sore throat. Ah, you must be feeling really bad. Let's write a prescription of medicine for you. Take this medicine and you'll feel better. That's how things are done in Japan. In the United Kingdom, if you go to your general, your GP, a general practitioner, your doctor, with a cold, he'll say, what are you doing here? Don't waste my time. Don't come here with a cold. Go home, sleep. What do you expect me to do about it? Medicine, for a cold, the best medicine is

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sleep, just go home. Very, very different way of doing things. Of course it's to do with the different systems. The British medical system is public and the Japanese is privatized and you know. But it's all a part of the culture, different ways of doing things. In Germany and I think Japan as well, Germany and Japan tend to be very similar, culturally, by the way. In Germany, time is absolutely fixed. If I say 1:00 PM, I mean 1:00 PM. My children however, went to the Indian International School in Kirigaoka, quite close to here. When they say 1:00 PM at the Indian school, they mean it could be 12 PM, it could be 3 PM, it's just, you know, it's some time early afternoon. Time is totally flexible in Indian culture, to the point where it drove us absolutely insane. They'd have a sports day. What time does sports day start? 10 AM. You get there at 10 AM and there's nobody there. Because when they say we're starting at 10 AM, they mean we're starting some time late morning, when people eventually arrive. This is all to do with the culture, and it effects the way that you communicate. Because if you are doing business with somebody from India and they say, 10:00, do they mean 10:00? Maybe yes but maybe no. It's something you've got to check. Whereas if you're Indian and you do business with people in Germany, it would be very, very silly to keep your own culture and to ignore the way the Germans do things. Humor, I've already talked about that. Conversation style as well, is also another very important part of culture. We don't really have time to go into this in detail, but I've kind of squeezed in a little chart here. This is from, this is from a great book that everybody should read called, *The Culture Map*. It's not written on here but it will be linked in the resources. *The Culture Map* by Erin Meyer is a must-read book. Basically, Japanese is what we call a high-context culture. Have you ever heard that before? No? If a culture, if a language is high-context, it means you need a high level of context to understand it. Japanese is actually the highest context language in the world. Meaning you can't understand what people mean without an understanding of the context. Incidentally, American English, not British English, British English is closer to Japanese, not much but closer. American English is actually the lowest context culture in the world, meaning what American people say is exactly what they mean. It's, it's very clear. We say this, we mean this. A great example of this. Anybody familiar with Niki's Kitchen? Niki's Kitchen. It's, actually it might only be in Tokyo. I'm not sure if it's outside of Tokyo or not. Niki's kitchen is an online, it's a cooking school, basically. The way she set it up is people can book cooking classes with people from all over the world. And you go to their house and they teach you how to cook. A friend of mine is from Sri Lanka and she's one of the teachers for them. So people can book online, I want to learn Sri Lankan cooking, so I'm going to go to this person's house and I'm going to have a cooking lesson and then I'm going to go home and then that's it. She started this business originally because people kept saying to her, her foreign friends kept saying, I want to make friends with Japanese people but when I say to Japanese people, next time come to my house sometime, I'll cook for you. They always say, yeah, I'd love that. But they never come.

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Why not? But of course, when people in Japan say, please come to our house next time. It's not necessarily meant literally. Whereas if you say to an American person or a British person, come to our house next time. I pull out my diary, oh okay, I'm free next Saturday. Whoa, whoa, whoa, that's not what I meant at all. And Niki's Kitchen started because she noticed that foreign people got very upset about this. People would say, come to our house, I wanna share Sri Lankan cooking with you. People would say, yeah, sure, I'll come, but never come. And then people would say to them, come to our house next time and see, I'd love to, but then the chance to go would never, never come. So Niki's Kitchen was a business built around that. But it's a perfect example of how this, kind of low, high-context culture, low-context culture works in language. You have to know that when somebody in Japan says come to our house sometime. It's not a direct invitation to come next week. But if you're in America and somebody says that to you, they actually want you to come to their house. It's all a part of the culture of language. So, really the message that I want to share there is learn the culture of the people that you use English with. And more than worrying about grammar mistakes or pronunciation, that is far more effective for international communication. We've got 10 minutes left, which is just right for questions. Does anybody have any questions? If not, we've got 10 minutes to have a sleep. Yes?

Female Student: Could you tell us a little bit about two-step speaking, because setting a goal and this and .

Julian: Yes. Thank you for reminding me, actually. Two-step speaking is my, is one of my courses that basically shows people step-by-step how to improve their English and you asked me to talk about some of that today, but it's too much so what I'm going to do is, well, okay, first of all, goal, your why. Why do you learn English? Why do you speak English? In my experience, people who are very clear about why they do something tend to be very, very successful because, without the goal, things just don't tend to, you know, we procrastinate. We procrastinate, we don't do anything, and things don't really work very well. But you want me to talk about the exercises and practicing and the basics. What I'll do is, I'll put some videos on this page to demonstrate them. So, I mean if you're learning English, if you are self-studying, practicing by yourself, people tend to think, oh, if I don't have native speakers around me, how can I practice? But actually you don't need native speakers to practice with. There are loads of ways that you can learn English and practice English and get good at the language. Just by yourself. What I'll do is I'll add some videos on this page that demonstrate some exercises that are very effective for pronunciation or for building fluency, shadowing and dictation that you want me talk about, so. Yeah, I'll put some videos on there cause otherwise you'll just sit and watch me pretending to do it, so. Any other questions?

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Male Attendee: I'm going to ask about how do you teach, learn the culture, did you learn Japanese culture?

Julian: That's a great question. That's a great question. That's one that I'm still trying to find a really good answer for. The simple answer is by using materials that teach you culture. For me, the best learning materials are things like novels. Novels are always going to have lots of culture in them. I really like crime fiction. Like detective novels. There's a crime fiction series by a Norwegian guy called Jo Nesbo. And I read all of those books and I learned a lot about Norway, a Norwegian culture from those books. And then recently I read a crime fiction series by a guy called Qiu Xiaolong from Shanghai, Chinese writer. His detective series, it's very similar. A murder happened. Who did the murder? You know, it's a simple story. But his books are all about Chinese culture. And you can learn a lot about Chinese culture from reading those books. The same for Japanese culture. I read a lot of Japanese fiction. When I was teaching, I used to be a secondary school teacher in Japan, first public and then private. I watched a lot of TV drama's about Japanese school life. You don't have to go to a Japanese school to learn about Japanese schools. Watch TV drama, you know, they're a bit over the top but you learn the basics of Japanese school culture. I watched a lot of drama's, a lot of films and you learn the language and the culture all mixed in together. When I make teaching materials that I use with my students, I always try to include these cultural points in them. But films and TV is just as good. Yeah, it's a good question.

Female Attendee: I just wanted to just ask you about British Story programs. It's the best material.

Julian: I have, she is a good salesman cause I had forgotten all about that. Yes, I have a course all about British culture which is based on what I just talked about.

Female Attendee: Use chunks and the culture.

Julian: We should just swap. Cause you know what I do better than I do. British Stories is a course that I have, it's based on just that. You, it's a set of stories about British culture. You learn the language alongside the culture. I found that very effective with people who are living in the UK especially. But also people who do business with the UK, who visit the UK, who like the UK, so, yeah. Thank you. I'd forgotten all about it.

Male Attendee: I used to, sometimes, Japanese joke.

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- Yes. I meant English joke, English joke. English joke. It's on culture?

Julian: It's culture, it's because of the different way that we think. It goes very, very, very deep culture. There's been studies done on culture like, crazy studies where they get people to look at a brick wall and American people see the individual brick. Oh, it's bricks. But they say Asian people tend to see the wall. The difference between group culture, individuality. Jokes are the same in that in order to understand the humor, you need to understand the cultural values of the people. I find, I mean, even English speaking cultures, I find, I'm going to be completely honest here. I find American humor very much not funny. I don't really get American humor. Like, my American friends will be laughing, ah, that's really funny and I'd be like, no it's not. There's nothing funny about that. But at the same time, my American friends very, very, very rarely understand my humor and my British friends. Especially with my British friends. We tend to be very sarcastic. Very ironic. We tend to say quite nasty things to each other. All right so you've got fatter today. You know, my friend will say to me, my belly's sticking out a bit. And my American friends will be like, that's a really horrible thing to say. Why are you saying that to him? But for British people, that's how we're friendly with each other. It's like the, it's pouring down with rain so I say, it's beautiful weather today, kind of humor. I think it's, again, it's a cultural thing. It runs very deep but it's to do with our values and the way that we think and the way that we see the world. And you've just got to, the more you learn about other peoples cultures, the more it becomes funny. But it's hard, it's hard to do. Joking in a foreign language, it doesn't work very often. Any other questions, before we finish?

Male Attendee: I have a question.

Julian: Sure.

Male Attendee: Chunking.

Julian: Yes.

Male Attendee: What do you, how to make chunk?

Julian: First by looking at examples. Look at, listen to the way the native speakers speak. And you'll notice that they're basically speaking in chunks. First, it's just knowing. If you know we speak in chunks, you notice them easier. Whatever materials you use to study from, whether it's a book or a textbook or a TV show or a

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film, just pay attention to the chunks. And instead of listening for words that you don't know, listen for chunks. If you write a word down in your notebook, don't write the word down, write the whole phrase down. And practice as a phrase. And it's, it takes getting used to, but once you do get use to it, it becomes very easy, I think. I hope that helps.

Female Attendee: Buy British Stories program.

Julian: Oh yes, you can buy my course. It was me thinking I'd come in, I'm not doing any sales today. I'm not selling anything and you sell everything for me. Or you can buy my book and in my book I tell you, in detail, all about chunking. But you can't buy my book because it's not printed yet. But you kind of can. There's a URL at the bottom. Eventually, eventually, it will be published. I promise. You bought my book ages ago. And I still haven't sent it to you, I'm sorry. Let's finish, let's finish, let's finish. Thank you.