



The London Eye
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Stand-Up Comedy For Language Learners

PODCAST #S1E6: Welcome to this new episode of “The Deep Dive” In today’s episode, Dan and Mary will give you some tips on how to improve your listening skills while having fun. We hope you enjoy it!

D: Hey, everyone. Welcome back. Ready for another deep dive.

M: Let's do it.

D: Alright. So today, we're gonna look at something you might not expect. We're talking stand up comedy.

M: Stand up comedy.

D: Yeah. And how it can actually be like a secret weapon

M: A secret weapon.

D: For learning English. I know it sounds a little crazy, but trust me.

M: I'm intrigued.

D: There's actually a lot we can learn from those hilarious folks on stage.

M: Right.

D: Like, think about it. They're using real language. Right? Not the stuffy kind you find in textbook.

M: Oh, absolutely. Like, if you wanna sound natural

D: Right.

M: You gotta go beyond the textbook phrases.

D: Exactly.

M: And comedians, they're masters of that.

D: So it's more about, like, the everyday slang and expressions.

M: Yeah. All the little things that native speakers use without even thinking. Think contractions, idioms, slang.

D: Like "wanna" instead of "want to".

M: Exactly. Or like "spill the tea", which basically means...

D: "Gossiping".

M: Exactly.

D: See, that's something a textbook might not teach you.

M: Nope.

D: But it's super useful in real life.

M: Absolutely. It's what makes you sound fluent, like you actually belong.

D: That reminds me, when I was learning Spanish, it was the idioms that really tripped me up.

M: Oh, for sure.

D: But, hey, that's not all stand up's good for. Right? Our source material was also talking about how it can give us these little glimpses into different cultures.

M: Oh, totally. I mean, stand up is all about observations about life.

D: Right

M: Relationships, work, even politics.

D: Right. Right.

M: And they're usually poking fun at those things, which can be a really engaging way to learn about a culture's quirks.

D: Interesting. Can you give me, like, a concrete example of that?

M: Sure. Let's say a comedian's talking about, "dating".

D: Right. "Dating".

M: And they're comparing how it works in their own culture versus, like, here in the US.

D: Gotcha.

M: They might joke about different approaches to small talk or, you know, what's considered a total "no no" on a first date.

D: Oh, that's a good one.

M: Right. And even things like "*ghosting*", which has become...

D: Yeah. I hate "*ghosting*".

M: It's a universal experience. But, see, as you're laughing along

D: Yeah.

M: You're also picking up these subtle cultural cues.

D: Like, accidentally learning...

M: Totally. Like, osmosis. You're not even trying, but suddenly you understand why your friend from another country does that thing that always seemed kinda weird before.

D: Okay. I'm sold. Stand up. Cultural immersion, A and B language learning.

M: Two birds, one stone.

D: But hold on. Let's not forget about vocabulary. There's gotta be some, colorful language we could pick up from these routines.

M: Oh, are you kidding? Comedians are, like, walking dictionaries of slang and interesting expressions.

D: Oh, spill the tea. What kind of words are we talking about?

M: But, like, they might use "savage" to describe something that's just...

D: Awesome

M: Truly awesome, or they'll twist a common idiom in a funny way and, bam, you've got a new way to express yourself.

D: That makes sense. I gotta ask, though, fast paced speech... in a new language.

M: Ah, yeah.

D: That could be a nightmare. So how does watching stand up help with that? Wouldn't it make it even harder to understand?

M: It's like, think of it like training for a marathon.

D: Okay.

M: You wouldn't just run 26 miles in your 1st day. Right?

D: No way.

M: Exactly. Yeah. You gotta build up to it.

D: So start slow.

M: Yeah. Choose comedians who have clear diction.

D: Okay. And then...

M: Then as you get more comfortable

D: Yeah.

M: You can branch out. Try those with faster delivery or maybe thicker accents.

D: So it's like, gradually training your ear.

M: Exactly.

D: Got it. Any other, tips for using stand up for listening practice?

M: Sure. I mean, you could always start with subtitles

D: Subtitles. Yeah.

M: Just to get a feel for the rhythm and, you know, the vocabulary.

D: Makes sense.

M: And then gradually turn them off as you improve.

D: Like a training wheel situation.

M: Exactly. And another thing, if you're trying to master a specific accent, focus on comedians from that region.

D: Oh, that's a good tip.

M: Yeah. It's like having a personalized language coach but funnier.

D: A lot funnier. And speaking of funny, our source actually recommended checking out specific comedians. Do you have any, personal faves that you think would be good for language letters?

M: Oh, yeah. Tons. I mean, someone like Trevor Noah.

D: Trevor Noah.

M: He's fantastic. His style's super engaging, and he often mixes in different accents and languages.

D: Wow. So he's educational, A and B. Hilarious.

M: The best combo. Or for something a little more, classic, Ellen DeGeneres.

D: Oh, go. Yeah.

M: She's great for clear delivery and that observational humor. You know?

D: Yeah.

M: Easy to follow. And then if you're up for a challenge...

D: Bring it on.

M: Dave Chappelle.

D: Yeah.

M: He's brilliant, but definitely more fast paced.

D: A pro level comedian.

M: Yeah.

D: Okay. Those are some great starting points. I'm already making a list.

M: Awesome.

D: So big takeaway today. Language learning doesn't have to be all textbooks and grammar drills.

M: Definitely not.

D: Stand up comedy. It's a fun, engaging way to learn.

M: And it's everywhere.

D: Exactly. So here's a thought for you as we wrap up. What comedians are you curious to check out? Think about accents, humor styles, or cultures you're interested in and go explore. There's a whole world of language learning waiting for you in stand up comedy.

M: See you next time.

D: See you.