info@dwenglishschool.com WhatsApp: +7-926-062-40-37

# Learning English by Skype - FAQs

People have been using Skype to communicate across the world for over 10 years. Its value as an educational tool was quickly realized and now students around the world use Skype to learn a variety of foreign languages.

Finding a good teacher can be hard, but Skype has removed geographical restrictions to doing so. Furthermore, a wider world of opportunity has opened up - as well as offering complete locational flexibility, groups can even be formed with students in different countries.

Most importantly, your lessons will still follow my two most important beliefs - they should always be useful, and they should always be enjoyable.

If the idea of learning English by Skype is still a bit of a mystery, here are the answers to some common questions that new students have. And if your question isn't here, send me a message and I'll add it to the list!

## I want English lessons by Skype - what should I do?

First of all, send us an email to info@dwenglishschool.com or WhatsApp us on +79260624037. This can be in English or Russian. We'll arrange a free placement test and 'get to know you' on Skype, where we'll:

- Find out your English level
- Ask you about why you want to study English and whether you want general, business or exam English, or something more specific. We'll also make your individual plan
- Ask you when and how often you want lessons, and arrange your first lesson

This will take 15-30 minutes and is absolutely FREE. For young learners, we'll discuss the logistics with a parent/nanny but test the student. See our young learners guide for more information.

You don't need to pay for a full month before your first lesson - see if you like it first (we're sure you will!) Then, you can either pay lesson by lesson or on a monthly basis (see below).

#### What does a Skype lesson look like?

A Skype lesson is similar to a typical individual or small group communicative method lesson with a NATIVE SPEAKER - you have the opportunity to speak a lot in English, learn and practice new grammar and vocabulary in a fun and practical way (not with a boring teacher giving you hundreds of lists and charts to remember), and listen to modern texts and dialogues. All lessons are INDI-VIDUALLY PLANNED, taking into account YOUR needs.

Your teacher will contact you via the chat function a minute or two before the lesson start time, and will call you if you are ready. This can be a video call, as recommended, or with you keeping your camera switched off (so don't worry about bad hair days:) The lesson will proceed through a mixture of conversation and lexis/grammar exercises, and will always feature practice with the new material. Files and links can be exchanged throughout and the lesson should always be fun, dynamic and above all, useful.

#### Do I need any special equipment?

Just a laptop, the Internet and the Skype program, which can be downloaded and used for free. You can also use your phone or tablet. Most gadgets have a built-in camera, but even this is not essential. You don't need any other equipment. Your teacher will have a HD camera and fast Internet. The faster your Internet, the better, but anything over 25mb/sec should be enough. Some students prefer to use a headset, but this is up to you.

# Who can learn English by Skype?

We are happy to teach any level and any age - even if you don't yet know a single word of English. We are trained to teach anyone, and believe that everybody should have the opportunity to learn a language. We've taught all kinds of people, from legal professionals to schoolchildren. Age and location are no barrier!

For young learners, we have a special guide in order to maximize their lessons and keep them safe online. In short though, from the age of about 7 (and with a few minutes of helping them understand about exchanging files), kids can study with confidence. We have already found that ages 10-15 tend to be the most proficient Skype users! For students under 10 we recommend a parent is on hand to help out, just in case. Of course, everyone is different and we're happy to discuss the different options with you personally. In any case, you'll be sent a short report after every young learner lesson, letting you know exactly what your child studied in the lesson and any homework. Communication is key and we are always ready to discuss things with you.

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### When, where and how often can I have lessons?

We teach Monday to Friday, but you can also study at weekends by special request. Lessons can start from 08:00 to 20:00 CET and you can have lessons any time that we have an available slot. So, whether it's during your working day or after work/school, we'll do our best to find the most convenient time for you.

You can study in your office, in a separate meeting room, at home, even on holiday. The great thing about Skype lessons is that you are not restricted by location.

How often is up to you - most adult students study for 90 minutes twice per week, young learners for 60 minutes, which gives a nice balance between making good progress and not feeling 'swamped'. For some students, once per week is enough, while those who want to make a lot of progress in a short space of time can even study every day if they want (and you will receive up to 20% off lessons if you do so).

#### How long are lessons?

There are three different lengths to choose from - 45 minutes, 60 minutes and 90 minutes. Obviously, the longer the lesson the more material we can cover - and crucially, the more speaking practice you'll get. But whatever length of lesson you choose, we'll maximize the time so that no minute is wasted. You can of course mix and match, for example 90 minutes Monday and Wednesday and 45 minutes on a Friday.

# Will I have homework?

We always recommend that you do some homework in order to most effectively practice and remember the material. However, if you'd prefer to have less homework, or even none at all, we can plan your lessons accordingly.

## How can you check my homework?

There are many ways to exchange homework, but most will be checked in the teachers' own time. Some exercises will be briefly checked in the lesson, and speaking exercises such as presentations have to be performed in the lesson. The rest you can:

- Send typed in the Skype chat box
- Send electronically by email or WhatsApp as a pdf or Word file
- Send by email or WhatsApp after printing, completed with your own handwriting and scanned or photographed

We will do whatever is the most convenient for YOU!

### What materials are used?

We use a range of materials, all from renowned publishers such as Oxford, Cambridge and Mac-Millan. All are modern, easy to use and readily available. The main course book for adult and teenage lessons is English File, and we use Market Leader for Business English lessons. Young learners use a range of materials. All can be downloaded or bought globally, which we do recommend. Your teacher will also supplement lessons with other worksheets and web links.

## I like to write things down, not remember from a screen - how can I do it?

This is always a strange question for us - don't worry, you can still copy down all the new words and grammar and you can make notes in your book (and even with an electronic copy of the course book you can make notes)! The 'board' will be in the teacher's room and also in the chat box - even though there is a screen, you should still bring a pen and notebook to every lesson.

#### Will I need to do tests?

You will be given tests to do as homework at the end of each unit. If you have chosen not to do homework, there is no obligation to do these - tests are for you to check your progress and knowledge. There will also be a short review of previous material at the beginning of each lesson, to help everything stay in your memory.

#### Can I prepare for international exams, such as FCE or IELTS, with you?

Yes of course! Upon first contact we will always ask you what your reasons for learning English are. Whether you know want you want/need or have never considered studying for an international exam, we'll offer you the best choice for your needs.

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# How can I pay for lessons?

You can pay for lessons in a number of ways. By far the easiest is a card payment on our website , through PayPal. It is safe, easy and you don't need a PayPal account to make such a payment. We'll also cover any PayPal fees, so the price you see is the price you pay. Bank transfers and other options are also possible. We'll send you all the necessary details before your lessons start.

You can pay in advance at the start of each month, pay for half months, or on a lesson by lesson basis. If you are in a group of friends/colleagues, you can make a payment as a group (so a group of 4 could make one payment, not 4). You will be sent an invoice with all the details of the lessons to be paid for. We will always try to be flexible and understanding regarding payments and do please discuss any issues with us.

#### What about cancellations?

We understand that plans can change but we do ask that any cancellations be made 24 hours in advance. If not, we will unfortunately have to charge you for that lesson. If for some reason we have to cancel a lesson, you will of course pay nothing. If you have pre-paid for your lessons, we can either save any overpayment as credit, or refund the money.

#### E.g. 1

I paid for 8 lessons in October, but I had to cancel Monday's lesson on the previous Friday because I found out I had to be in a meeting. I asked if we could reschedule but it wasn't possible. I was offered a refund or to pay for 7 lessons in November. I chose to pay for 7 lessons in November instead.

#### E.g. 2

In February I know I will go on holiday for 10 days and miss 3 lessons. I don't want to study while on holiday. I told you before making my payment for February. We were able to reschedule one lesson, but I would still only have 6 lessons in February. I paid for 6 lessons.

#### E.g. 3

I study in a group with 3 people, but one person didn't come to today's lesson. The lesson wasn't cancelled, but we only had to pay the 2-student lesson price. The extra money we had paid was discounted the next month.

Technical problems are rare, but If you have a technical issue during the lesson, you will have to pay for that lesson. However, the teacher will try to help you resolve the problem, and can even switch to a WhatsApp call if necessary. Any extra materials can be sent by email. If the problem is our fault and you lose more than 10% of the lesson, we'll give you a discount for the lost time on the next lesson or teach the lost minutes before or after a future lesson.

#### How long will it take to complete a level, e.g. Pre-Intermediate?

This depends very much on the individual and on the level studied, but with our well-trained and highly-qualified native speakers it should take approximately 6 months to complete one level if studying for 90 minutes twice per week. If you are learning quicker, we will not waste your time and money - we will increase the pace. And we will slow down and have patience if you need a little more time. The most important thing for us is that you can understand and use the target material - not how long it takes. If you need to finish a certain level by a certain date, e.g. by completing an exam, we'll be happy to discuss the possibilities with you.

# I'm going to a different city on business next week, but I don't want to miss a lesson - can I still have my lesson?

Of course! That's the beauty of Skype lessons! We'll discuss the most convenient times for you to and accommodate you as best we can. Just don't forget to check that your room has the Internet:)

# My friend/colleague/husband/wife/child wants to study with you - is it possible?

Of course! We'll exchange contact details and send them all the information they need. And as a 'thank you' to you, if that student studies for the equivalent of one month (that is, 8 lessons), you'll get a free lesson! If you refer 2 students and they study in 2 groups for 8 lessons, you get 2 free lessons (if they study in one group, that equals one free lesson, not two).

#### Have we missed something?

If there's anything else you'd like to know, don't hesitate to contact us in English or Russian:

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