

## SPEAK ENGLISH NOW PODCAST

### #014: The Passive Vocabulary - Why is SPEAKING so difficult?

Hi, Everyone!

I'm Georgiana, founder of [SpeakEnglishPodcast.com](http://SpeakEnglishPodcast.com). My mission is to help YOU speak English fluently.

In this episode:

- I'll talk about the passive vocabulary, and I'll focus on the difference between the active and passive vocabulary.
- After that, we'll simulate a conversation with the Question & Answer technique.

OK, let's start!

Like I've just mentioned earlier, in this episode, I'd like to focus on the passive vocabulary.

There are two kinds of vocabularies that we all acquire in time, no matter whether it's your native language or a foreign language.

The first and more obvious one is the **active vocabulary**. These are the words we use when we speak or write.

On the other hand, there's the **passive vocabulary**. And these are all the words we understand when we read or listen.

Let me make myself clear: You fully understand the meaning of these words; you don't just guess their meaning when you read or listen. However, you can't use them in a conversation.

It's complicated to use the passive vocabulary when you speak because understanding the words just isn't enough. You'll need to listen and read these words several times before they become part of your active vocabulary.

At this point, you may think that using passive vocabulary is only difficult when you're trying to speak in English, but unfortunately you'll encounter the same difficulty when using your mother tongue.

Let me give you an example:

Let's say that you're reading an article about the economic situation of a country. You fully understand the whole article, but if you had to speak about this topic, I'm convinced that you'd use words that you're more acquainted with. If you had to talk about the economic situation of a country you'd use the active vocabulary and not the passive one.

When it comes to English, it's the same. You can only use about 20% from all the vocabulary you've learned. So, if you know 1000 words, you'll probably use only 200 words.

The best way to **activate your passive vocabulary** is by **repetition**. If you listen to the same audios many times, you'll be able to transform passive vocabulary into active vocabulary.

We tend to use the words we listen to more. For example, the verbs to be, to go or objects like car, paper; etc. These words are so common that have become part of your active vocabulary from the very beginning.

The natural process when learning English is to activate words gradually, but at the same time, you expand your passive vocabulary. So, there'll always be words that you understand, but you won't use them when you speak. It's natural, don't worry about it.

Therefore, you need to be patient. Understanding the words is always the first step. The second step will be repeating these words in many different occasions until you're capable of using them in a conversation.

Sometimes it may happen the opposite. A word from the active vocabulary may occasionally become part again of the passive

vocabulary. This happens because the word isn't consolidated enough.

My suggestion is: Enjoy the process of learning English. In time you'll start using a more enhanced vocabulary. There's no doubt about it.

## MINISTRY (improve your speaking)

Ok, let's move on to the next section.

Here, I'll use the Question & Answer technique. This is the perfect lesson for automatizing your spoken English. This is how it works:

- I'll give you some information. (A phrase or two).
- I'll ask simple questions.
- After each question, there will be some seconds of silence: it's your turn to answer the question! Just try to give an easy and short answer, not a complex one.
- After you answer, I'll give you a correct answer.

This process will continue and little by little; I'll be telling a story using questions and answers.

Today, we'll use the first and the second person with the questions.

Ok, let's get started!

**Last summer I could've used about 500 words and understood 2000.**

*Could I have used 500 words last summer?*

Yes, you could've used 500 words last summer.

*Could I have understood 2000?*

Yes, you could've understood 2000.

*How many words could I have used?*

500 words. You could've used 500.

*Could I have used 2000 words in a conversation?*

No, you couldn't have. You just could've used 500 words.

*When was that? Last summer? Last winter?*

Last summer. It was last summer. I could've used 500 words and understood 2000.

**I wanted to increase my active vocabulary.**

*Did I want to increase my money?*

No, no. You didn't want that. This is not what you said. You wanted to increase your active vocabulary.

*Did I want to decrease my passive vocabulary?*

No, you didn't. You didn't want that. You wanted to increase your active vocabulary.

*What did I want to increase?*

Your active vocabulary. That's what you wanted to increase.

*Did I want to extend my active vocabulary?*

Yes. You wanted to extend or increase your active vocabulary.

**During five months, I listened to an English podcast one hour a day.**

*Did I watch TV?*

No. No. You didn't watch TV. You listened to a podcast.

*Did I listen to a radio show?*

No, neither. You didn't watch TV nor listen to a radio show.

*What did I listen?*

A podcast. You listened to a podcast one hour a day.

*Did I listen to a podcast 2 hours a day?*

No, no. You didn't listen to a podcast two hours a day, but one.

*How many hours did I listen a day?*

One. One hour a day. You listened one hour a day.

*What did you listen?*

An English podcast. You listened to an English podcast.

**Listening to that podcast has helped me add more words to my vocabulary.**

*Has the podcast helped me?*

Yes. It has helped you. The podcast has helped you.

*Has the podcast helped me add more words to my vocabulary?*

Yes, it has. It has helped you add more words to your vocabulary.

*Has the podcast helped me decrease my vocabulary?*

No, no. It hasn't helped you to do that. It has helped you to add more words to your vocabulary.

*How has listening helped me?*

It has helped you increase your vocabulary.

**Now I'm sure that my active and passive vocabularies have doubled.**

*Am I sure that my active and passive vocabularies have increased?*

Yes. You're sure about that. Your passive and active vocabularies have increased. They have doubled.

*What has doubled?*

Your passive and active vocabularies. They have doubled.

*Has your active vocabulary doubled?*

Yes, it has doubled. My active vocabulary has doubled.

*What has happened with my passive vocabulary?*

It has doubled, too. Your passive vocabulary has doubled, too.

*Have your passive and active vocabularies doubled?*

Yes. They have doubled.

Excellent! This is the end of this short mini-story. Here, we have practiced the first and second person and some tenses. Please listen to the story as many times as you need until you feel comfortable answering.

As you can see, you're answering easy questions all the time. They are easy on purpose, and this technique helps you develop your speaking skills. It's like practicing with another person!

In fact, this is one of the techniques that I use in my courses. I recommend you to take a look at:

[Courses.SpeakEnglishPodcast.com](http://Courses.SpeakEnglishPodcast.com)

Ok, this is the end of this episode. Remember to listen to it several times. It'll help you with your English.

Please remember that you can get the text of this episode at:

[www.SpeakEnglishPodcast.com](http://www.SpeakEnglishPodcast.com)

See you next week and have a beautiful day!

Bye! Bye!



See you next week and have an awesome day!

Goodbye!

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