

# EFFORTLESS ENGLISH

FREE TEXT TRANSCRIPT



**Effortless English**  
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# Gap Year Sabbatical

Welcome to The Effortless English Show with the world's number one English teacher, AJ Hoge. Where AJ's more than 40 million students worldwide finally learn English once and for all without the boring textbooks, classrooms, and grammar drills. Here's AJ with a quick piece to help you learn to speak fluent English effortlessly.

Hi, I'm AJ Hoge, the author of *Effortless English: Learn to Speak English Like A Native*. Join my Power English course at [EffortlessEnglishClub.com](http://EffortlessEnglishClub.com). My course is at [EffortlessEnglishClub.com](http://EffortlessEnglishClub.com).

I had been in school my whole life. From kindergarten, through elementary school, through middle school, through high school, through four years of undergraduate college, and through my first year of grad school. All those years sitting in classes listening to teachers talk and talk and talk, taking notes, memorizing, repeating everything on the test, working ... Working to please the teacher like a good little boy and get good grades.

Well, I was tired of it. I was tired of all of that. And so, I saved some extra money during my first year of grad school. I lived very, very, very cheaply. And my dream was to finally get out and see the world during the summer. I had a summer break, about three months, between my first year and my second year of grad school. And I decided I don't want to go somewhere similar to America. What's the point? I need to see something different. I need to get out and experience the world. I need to challenge myself. Can I survive in a country very, very different than my own for two or three months? I needed to test myself. I was tired of being a good little boy getting good grades, pleasing teachers.

And so I went to India during that summer. My first time to leave the United States. I shaved my head (buzzing sound), no hair. I had a small backpack and I flew to India. I arrived in Bombay. And I've told this story before. When I arrived it was like an alien world to me. So, so different than the United States. Everything was different. And everyone looked at me, because I was also different. In America no one looked at me. I was just like most people. Most people never noticed me in America. But in India, everywhere I went people stared at me. And that was very, very stressful for me for a while.

Well, I had to figure out how to survive and live in India for the full summer, and even small things were very challenging for me. Going and getting rail tickets. I tried ... My first train ride in from Bombay up to a place called Vadodara, uh, I had a huge adventure. I got in the taxi. The taxi driver tried to cheat me, because I was a foreigner. So, he drove around and around and around. Because he wasted so much time to get more money, I was late for my train. Missed my train. Then I tried to find the office so I could, you know, get a new train ticket, but instead there were these like con artists, these kind of criminals hanging out, and they pretended to be train officials and they tried to sell me fake tickets. And then I had to figure out, oh, these guys, they're not real. They're criminals. And then they were trying to kind of, uh, scare me a little bit. So I had to push back. And I was just, I was a super, super wimpy, weak, super, super extra nice guy at that time. I'm still a nice guy, but I'm a little stronger now.

And so I had to learn to deal with all this. People trying to cheat me all the time, being a strange person, a foreigner. Now, most people in India are very nice, but like anyplace, you know. Same in new York City. If you go, if you're obviously a tourist, and you ... It's obvious you don't know what you're doing, then, yeah, the, the criminals will notice you, and they will try to cheat you. And so, you know, I was, I was young. I, it was obvious that I had never been outside America. It was obvious I didn't know what was happening. I just had that dumb, innocent look on my face. Uh... And so, it just, like, it just attracted the criminals.

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And so during my, I'd say probably my first month in India, I was constantly, constantly being harassed by criminals, by beggars trying to, you know, grabbing me by the arm. "Please give me money, uh, uh..." By people trying to cheat me. Store owners constantly trying to cheat me. People constantly grabbing me, trying to pull me into their shop. It was super stressful. I got sick. Very seriously. I was in the hospital for, I think three days, three to four days I was in the hospital. I don't remember now. And severely dehydrated, very weak, all by myself.

So it was a very, very difficult trip. Very challenging. But also, wow! What an amazing trip. Like this ... It was just like being in, in an alien ... On an alien planet, in an alien culture to me, because it felt so, so, so different. Everything felt like completely different and almost the opposite of America. So while it was very, very stressful and I was dealing with lots of con artists, people trying to cheat me constantly every single day, on the other hand I also saw just incredible things. And what an amazing country India is. Chaotic and colorful and so very, so, so amazing. Such a spiritual country in many ways, too.

And I met some incredible people as well. Some very friendly people. I met a ... I, I, in one college town I went and all the students they saw me, and, ah, they were ... Immediately they were all running to talk to me because I ... They never had seen an American at their university before. And I was just walking around. And, uh, one of them, you know, they, they, they rode me around on their motorbikes, they ... One of them, they took me to their family's house and gave me dinner, and then they gave me a tour of the whole town. They were so, so, so sweet and so nice. It was amazing. What an experience.

And I had experiences like that constantly through the whole trip. The trip was only a little more than two months. It felt like two years, because every day was full of so many new experiences. Every day had really high, high, high points, just incredible experiences. And every day had low, low, low points, terrible things and stress. It was extremes every single day. And, wow, I was challenged. By the end of two months I was so much stronger. Because everyone was trying to cheat me all the time, I had to learn to be much more forceful. We call this assertive in English. It's a positive word, assertive. It means, you know, you're forceful about what you want. If someone's bothering you, you say, "Go away! No!" Right? And I had to learn how to do that, because I was always mister sweet nice guy too much. Too sweet. Too nice. Too weak. And that trip to India really helped me to get stronger and to learn how to deal with people who were trying to cheat me or be bad to me.

By the end of the trip something had changed. Like my whole ... All my nonverbal communication changed. And when I went back to the big city, I didn't get bothered so much. It's like they could feel that something was different that I knew. And that ... I'd look at 'em, I'd look at 'em, and then look away and just ignore them. And there was just something about it ... They could tell, they ... That they couldn't pressure me. They couldn't make me stressed. They were not going to get something from me. And so I did not get bothered so much.

And now in my life, when I travel to places like that, I almost never get bothered. They, they, they can just feel it. Uh, I was in Kathmandu, Nepal, a couple of years ago with my cousin Philip. And all the like beggars and that kind of stuff ... They have some con artists. It's less than India, but they some. But they were all bothering my young cousin Philip. He had the same look on his face that I had all those years ago. He was young and innocent, first time traveling abroad like that, and so he kind of, ahhh, also. And they can feel it. Whereas myself walking around, you know, I kind of, I could just be, they could tell, "Oh, this guy...He, he's too strong. He's, he's too smart. He's not ... We're not going to be able to trick him."

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And so, that was great. I needed to learn that. I desperately needed to learn that in my life. It was so powerful. So I learned so much about India, about being a stronger person, and also just my confidence in being independent. I had to, you know, take care of all the, the planes and hotels and train rides and everything. And I'd never done anything like that before. So, I went away this little weak, kind of good little boy, dependent, just used to being in the safe little schools, and I came back feeling so much stronger, more confident, with so many incredible experiences.

Now, because of that, when I came back to America it was very difficult for me to go back to school. My second year of graduate school was very difficult. Not the classes. The classes were still easy and kind of pointless, but I could see that it was bullshit. Suddenly my eyes were opened. I had experienced some part of the world. And I realized, Oh my God, they're teaching me a bunch of useless bullshit, crap in school. This is useless. This isn't going to help me do anything in life for real. It's just a piece of paper. The paper, the degree, the master's degree, yeah. That'll help me get interviews. That'll help me get some jobs. So I'll finish it, but the actual classes, what I'm actually learning, is useless.

So my attitude during my second year of my first master's degree I had a terrible attitude. I was just ... I was kind of angry. I was angry because I was finally waking up and seeing all the lies of the school system and how it's all just so much bullshit. And I was angry with myself, too. I was angry with myself for being such a good little boy, just following along what my parents told me to do, following along what all the teachers told me to do, believing all the lies. I was so angry that I waited so long to finally take a chance and live a little bit. But I was so happy that I finally did. And that trip changed my life completely.

The reason I'm here now, a world traveler, a very successful business person, you know, Director of effortless English, all of that stuff ... All the great life that I have now that I love so much and enjoy, it's because of that first trip to India, because I finally took a chance. I stopped being a good little boy. I finally decided I'm going to live my life. I'm going to do something I really want to do. One of my dreams. I'm going to take a risk. I'm going to go somewhere that's totally different and scary. I'm going to do something I've never done. No, my parents didn't want me to do that in the middle of grad school. Everybody thought I was crazy. I'm so happy I did.

Now what I did is kind of similar to the idea of a gap year. It was a gap summer, okay? That's where I took a break from school and I went out into the real world to do something. Now in my case I traveled. After that experience I traveled so, so much. I continue to travel. I love travel. I have like a romantic feeling in my heart about traveling, because it did change my life so much. So I still love it. But the point is I got out in the real world and did something. And then my whole attitude about school changed. I saw it so differently.

This is why now I highly, highly, highly recommend to you, if you're young, do not immediately go to college. Do not immediately go to university. Take, I'd say, a few gap years. They call them gap years. It's a little idiom or phrase. What it means is that you finish secondary school. In America we call it high school. You finish that, but do not immediately go to college. Instead you wait for two or three years. What do you do during those two or three years? What do you do during the gap years? Well, you go live your life, for God's sake. Go live your life. Do you really just want to be sitting on your butt in classrooms your whole youth? What a waste, what a waste. It's not the real world. Stop being a good little boy. Stop being a good little girl. Take a chance and do something you've dreamed about, especially when you're young.



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What can you do? Well, you could do what I did. You could go travel. You'll have to save money, you'll have to live cheaply before you do it. You might have to go get a job that's not fun. You know, you might have to work at McDonald's or Burger King or doing some tough job that's no fun, and living at home and just saving, saving, saving. Then go take that big trip. By yourself. Do it alone, I recommend. That will challenge you. Solo travel challenges you. It will change your life, make you stronger.

What else could you do? Maybe you don't want to travel. Everyone doesn't want to travel. So you could do some ... How about just go work before you go to college and waste all that money, and it's so expensive. Go out and get in the real work world. Yes, even a crappy job that's no fun, because you will discover what the real world of work is life. Because you have no idea. If you've been in school your whole life, if you've never worked a job, you have no idea. So you can't make a good decision about your career. You cannot. It's just a fantasy. You're just imaging. But you really have no idea what it's like to work a full-time job. So get out there for a few years and do it. And do the best job you can even if, even if you get a job that's no fun, that pays very little. It's still good for you. You may not like it, but I'm telling you, it's good for you.

What else could you do? You could volunteer. Let's say, you know, your parents are willing to support you, so volunteer. Do something for humanity. Do something for people. If you're religious, do something for your, your religion. Where you're helping other people, volunteering your time and your effort. You could go build houses for people. You could help homeless people. You could give out food to people. There's all kinds of things you can do. There's so many ... Do that. What an experience that is. Let me tell you, that is much more powerful than any class that you will take in school. "Oh, I got an A in English Writing." Ehh ... So, so what. Get out there in the real world and help some people.

Another one? One of my favorites personally ... Start a business. Start a business. So many people ask me, "AJ, how do I start a business? What should I do? Blah blah blah ... " Just do something. Pick something and do it. Just try it. I'll tell you, at your age, if you're young, probably your first business will fail. My first couple attempts at businesses were not big successes, but I learned so much from the failures. It was such a good experience, again, in the real world. Man, it's an amazing experience. So, just think of an idea and do it. And no excuses. Please don't leave a comment saying, "Oh, but I have no money." Oh well, I had no money either. Effortless English was started with basically no money. You can start an online business with almost no money. You can start a service business in your town with no money. You don't need money to start a business. But you do need a lot of hard work, and you do need to learn business skills, including marketing, advertising, and selling. Those are big ones. You gotta read some books about that. You gotta practice them. But what a great experience.

Maybe you have other ideas for your gap years. I don't know. Think about it.

Now parents, same message for you. Do not send your children immediately to college. You are wasting your money. You're wasting your money and you're wasting their years, their life. You're wasting their youth. Don't do it. Don't do it. There's no hurry. There is no hurry. What's the big deal. If they wait a few years, oh, so what? They go to college when they're 21. They go to college when they're 22. That's not ... It's no big deal. No big deal. They lose nothing. They gain a lot. They gain three or four years of real world experience. They will be much better students when they finally do go back to college. They will be more clear. They will be more serious. They will be more motivated when they go back to college. They will be more mature, not little kids. They'll be adults finally. All of that is great. So, talk to your kids and say, "Look, I'm not going to spend tens of thousands of dollars on your college yet. I want you to get out

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in the real world and work a job or travel or start a business or whatever, volunteer ... " They can do a religious pilgrimage.

There's so many things they could do. But ... Depends on you, your family, your values. And talk to them, too. Talk to your child about this. And you can decide together what you think the best thing, or things are. If you've got a few years, they could try all of those. They could work for a year, save money, then go travel, then come back and volunteer, and then finally try to start a business. Who knows? If they start a business, if they're good, they might make enough money to pay for their own college. Wouldn't that be great? I think most parents would be quite happy about that. Honestly, too, I think most kids would be happy about it. I think most kids would feel proud to start a successful business and then to pay for their own college. That would be a feeling of being an adult, of being mature, of being proud and doing it themselves, instead of, "Mommy, daddy, please pay for my college."

Gap year. It's powerful. In the long run, you will be much more successful when you do this. Your children will be much more successful when they do this. I promise you. Okay, they're three years behind in school or four years behind some of the other kids. So what? Those kids are sitting in a class. They're not learning anything useful. Your kids, or you if you are a young person, a young youth ... You will catch those people and pass them later in life. I promise. You'll get into your thirties and you'll be making a lot more money, you're going to be a lot happier, you'll be more confident, more strong. Everything will be better when you do this.

And my final message ... What if you don't have kids? What if you're not a kid. You're not getting ready to go to school. What should you do? Well, gap years are great for people working, too. Now, what ... They call them sabbaticals. This an English word. Sabbatical. A sabbatical is when you take one year or any amount of time, but you take kind of a long time break from your job. In some universities professors do this. They, they're actually paid to do this in some places, amazing. But most places it's unpaid. But you just, you take one year or two years, and you, away from your job. And you go and you do one of these same things. Maybe you go back and you learn some new skill. Maybe you travel the world. Maybe you try to write a book. Maybe you try to start a business. Whatever. You're an adult, you decide. But you take that break again. Take risks. Challenge yourself. Try to achieve one of your big life dreams. If you don't have any big life dreams, just try to achieve something that seems interesting and fun or cool. It's also powerful.

I have done this my whole life, so my working life I, I took sabbaticals very frequently. Because I would just get bored. I get bored working the same job. I get bored doing the same thing all the time. So every few years ... Boom! I'd quit my job and I'd take off and do something totally different for a year or two years. I still do it. With Effortless English ... You'll notice sometimes on Effortless English ... look at my Youtube channel. Sometimes I'm publishing a lot of videos and I'm making courses and I'm doing lots and lots and lots of work, but eventually I get tired of that. I need a break. And so I also, I'll take a break from Effortless English. I'll go off and do something. My last big sabbatical trip was the Camino de Santiago in Spain. I took ... Well, I took a total of about two months off and I did a hike across Spain with my friend Joe, and I traveled around Spain a bit and some other places as well.

This is so important. If you don't do this, then you just ... You'll just be a good little boy or a good little girl your whole life, living for other people, doing what other people tell you to do. You'll never find what makes you super happy. You'll never find it. You gotta take risks. You gotta challenge yourself to find that. Take gap years. Take sabbaticals.

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Okay. I'm AJ Hoge. Join my Power English Course at [EffortlessEnglishClub.com](http://EffortlessEnglishClub.com). That's [EffortlessEnglishClub.com](http://EffortlessEnglishClub.com).

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# Effortless English

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-AJ Hoge



Hi, I'm AJ Hoge

- ..the author of “Effortless English: Learn To Speak Like A Native”
- ..host of “The Effortless English Show” with over 40 million downloads worldwide.
- ..trainer of corporate leaders, government officials, and most importantly people like you to speak English successfully.
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