



- Rob:** Hello, I'm Rob and this is 6 Minute English and I'm joined this week by Finn. Hello Finn.
- Finn:** Hello Rob.
- Rob:** We are in a **celebratory** mood this week Finn aren't we?
- Finn:** Yes we are. We have something **to shout about** – it's the 70th anniversary of the BBC teaching English to the world.
- Rob:** Happy birthday to us! So, we have been teaching English for 70 years – actually Finn I think we look quite good for 70!
- Finn:** Yes, not too many grey hairs. And you would think that if our audience has been listening for 70 years they would be **fluent** – or perfect speakers of English by now. Maybe we should just go home now?
- Rob:** Stay where you are – of course you know Finn that our audience is always changing. New people are finding us and wanting to learn English and we'll be finding out why they do very soon. But let's see what you've learnt over the years and see if you can answer this question. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, what is the most commonly used English word. Is it:
- a) I
 - b) and
 - c) the
- Finn:** Rob, I think it has to be c) *the*.
- Rob:** I'll let you know the answer at the end of the programme. Now let's talk more about 70 years of teaching English. The BBC's English-teaching department first started **transmitting** radio programmes in 1943. The world was a very different place then.

Finn: Yes. World War Two was taking place and many parts of Europe were occupied by German forces. It was felt that by teaching other nationalities English, they could understand radio news bulletins on the BBC Empire Service – the old name for the BBC World Service.

Rob: So, for many listeners there was **a practical need** to learn English.

Finn: After the war there was a big demand in people wanting to learn English and the BBC tried to do this in "...light and entertaining **dialogues** in simple, though not basic, English." That's conversations that sounded natural and interesting to listen to.

Rob: A bit like our programmes today. In the years after the war, people wanted to learn English not just to understand programmes on the BBC but so they could do business with or work for companies around the world. So we could say it had an **economic benefit**.

Finn: Today, people are learning online via the internet and some are learning English to **communicate** with – or talk or write to – other non-native speakers, particularly on social media.

Rob: That's true. We can hear from some students now who are learning English here in the UK. See if you can hear why they think it's important to learn English:

Vox pop of students:

My name is Bruno, I am from France, I like to learn English because this language is international and I can use it to have a conversation with people from different countries. I have more liberty if I want to speak with different people.

My name is Juan Reynoso, I come from Peru. I want to learn English because I think this is the language the world speaks.

Rob: Some good reasons there. Bruno and Juan want to learn English to communicate with others. Bruno says it gives him more liberty – he means freedom to speak with and understand other people.

Finn: So, English is good for that but let's hear some more practical reasons – or ways that it will be a real benefit to someone's life:

Vox pop of students:

My name is Rafael Guimaraes, I come from Sao Paulo in Brazil. I've chosen English because I am studying business so it's very important for my career and also because you can communicate to people from all over the world.

My name is Ivo. I am from Lima, Peru. I am planning on studying mechanical engineering and there is not much market for it in Peru, so I'm thinking of going abroad and for that I will need to learn another language so that's why I'm learning English too.

Rob: So, Rafael and Ivo are learning English to help with their studies. They hope it will help their **career**.

Finn: The jobs they will end up doing. So really they are learning English to help themselves!

Rob: Well luckily, BBC Learning English is here to help those and many other students around the world learn English. It is one of the world's most widely spoken languages so it is good to have a least **a smattering** – a small understanding – of English.

Finn: Yes, and if you want to live in the UK it's now expected that you can speak at least some English. But come on Rob, let's face it, learning a new language is fun too.

Rob: That's true and it's been fun teaching it for 70 years – let's hope we've helped at least some of you learn the language. Now Finn, let's find out if you answered my question correctly. Earlier I asked you what is the most commonly used English word.

Finn: I said *the*.

Rob: And you are right. *The* is the most commonly used word. Well, that's all we have time for today. Please join us again soon and keep learning English with BBC learning English.

Both: Bye.

Vocabulary and definitions

celebratory	describes a feeling of taking part in a special occasion
to shout about	to announce to everyone
fluent	to a very high standard
transmitting	broadcasting a radio signal
raised morale	improved people's mood and feelings, particularly at a difficult time
a practical need	a real life use
dialogues	conversations between two people
economic benefit	a result which improved a person or company's financial prospects
communicate	talk or write to and with other people
career	series of jobs you do through your working life
a smattering	a very small amount

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http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/2013/09/130912_6min_70_anniversary.shtml

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