

## My Journey as a Self-Taught English Student

When I was younger, English was the most dreaded subject among my classmates. It made them anxious, and they did not understand how valuable it can be. They considered it to be silly, useless, too hard and just plain boring. Mine, however, was a different story. This is an attempt to summarize my journey as a self-taught English student.

I studied in a private elementary school for four years, which gave me a good push in the right direction and built a good foundation for me. But it was quite simple and I reached a dead-end at some point and stopped progressing at school. I then searched for other resources to continue my attempt at mastering the English language. Literature was one of the first sources of learning that attracted me. I was obsessed with reading. I read everything; novels, poetry, and even non-fiction. I was incredibly fascinated with the power of words. I always wondered how a word could succeed in sparking such vivid imagery in my mind and have such a powerful emotional impact on me. By middle school, I had already read many translated works by Charles Dickens, Ernest Hemingway, Jane Austen and many other classic authors. From this point on, I had



one central goal, to further accelerate the improvement of my English as much as possible. I yearned to be able to read equally well in both Arabic and English. I needed to have a broader library to read from. I faced many challenges. At first, reading was challenging because I didn't have an extensive vocabulary, and the books I chose were way too advanced for me. Determinedly, I switched my primary source

of learning. I used the internet to find a more accessible and better way. The internet wasn't a big part of my life at that point, but I quickly learned how beneficial it could be. I started listening to podcasts, watching videos and documentaries, and reading articles, which not only helped me improve my English but also

helped me gain more knowledge of the world. I grew and became more knowledgeable in many different subjects. I greedily consumed materials relating to philosophy, history, culture, art, and many other spheres of information. I grew and changed so much. I developed so many skills and became acutely aware of myself and others. Language helped me gain a sense of belonging in the world. It gave me a purpose.

I didn't have much support with self-study. I only had my bookshelf and the internet, but there was a bigger goal that kept me going. Something that helped me to be more determined and focused. I had a deep, enigmatic and growing passion. I loved what I was doing and wanted to do more. I wanted to reach out to people and show them my work. But I could not find a proper way to express myself adequately. As I tried to communicate with a broader audience, I prayed to find a suitable platform. And then, it happened, I found art. I painted every day throughout my high school years. Most of my paintings reflected my studies and research. It was informed by the knowledge I acquired. Years later, I was finally able to exhibit my work at a local art exhibition. This was an enormous milestone for me. I genuinely believe that most of my success was influenced by my passion for language.

Incorporating English into my typical daily life was probably the thing that impacted my language learning experience the most. I developed many habits to improve my writing. I have a journal that I write in every day. I write about my readings and discuss my opinions. I keep a separate section where I write down any new words that I learn, and I look up their meanings later. I sometimes take passages from Arabic books and translate

them to English to practice my translation skills, improve my grammar, spelling and vocabulary.

Now that I am in college, I feel compelled to understand the language on a deeper level and discuss the actual sociolinguistic aspects of it. Today, language controls everything around us from media and culture to technology and the economy. Language is the key to understand the rules of the world, and it helps us to be more aware. In this rapidly changing world, which is primarily determined by communication, it is essential to maximize our mastery of languages.

As English students, we act as an important bridge between our country and the rest of the world. However, it is essential to

emphasize that we need to be connected to our own culture and adopt it as our primary source of knowledge. We need to have great respect and appreciation for our native, Arabic language. No matter how much we progress in acquiring new foreign language skills, we must ensure never to replace our mother tongue. We must never forget that once upon a time, we were all children who only spoke in Arabic



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