



**UPSKILLING
FOR CHANGE**
CREATING GLOBAL
TEACHERS

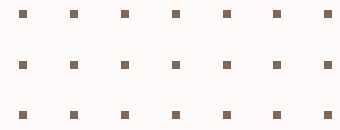


ME AND ENGLISH

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR COURSE

2024

Who this course is for



- Are you someone who speaks English as an additional language?
- Do you consider yourself an English learner?
- Do you work, socialise, or learn in English?

English is the current **global lingua franca**, it **connects us** all and allows us to **communicate, connect,** and **collaborate** across borders.

But not all speakers are made equal!



English is also a **problematic** language, often an indicator of **social status** or **educational achievement**, a **colonial** language, and a **barrier** for many **talented** people around the world who are **forced** to **work, learn, study,** and **express** themselves in a very 'foreign' language.

If you can identify with those struggles, this might be the course for you.

Who we are

Upskilling For Change teaches and promotes intercultural communicative competence to English learners and teachers around the world.

Our vision is an ELT profession which reflects and promotes the truly global, intercultural, and evolving nature of the English language, where learners and educators are valued and not exploited, where the focus is on effective communication between cultures, and where quality English language learning is accessible to all who desire it.

Our mission is to change attitudes and ideas around English as a 'status' language, to decolonise our teaching, value our educators, promote and celebrate all languages, and to shift to a thinking in which English is a tool for international access and mobility, where access to quality English-language education is a right, not a privilege. We want to see a world where English is used to aid effective intercultural cooperation and communication and where the teaching and learning of it reflects that use.

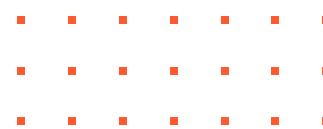


Founding Members

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What you will learn

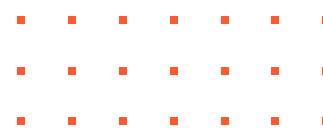


Based on Upskilling For Change's guiding **values & principles**, this is a course for English learners who wish to **examine their relationship with English**, and to examine the language in a more **social, cultural and political** context.

The course aims to boost your confidence in English by helping you to understand the English language's position as a **global lingua franca**, a **colonial language**, a **'status' language**. You'll come away with a better understanding of your own relationship to English, your feelings towards it and your need for it. We hope that when you finish this course, you'll **feel more positive** about your own relationship with the language, and much **more comfortable** when using it.

A focus on sharing spaces and peer-to-peer support encourages **collaborative learning** and **reflection**. Classes of mixed nationalities and a focus on **sharing** and **connection** helps promote intercultural understanding and will support learners **working** and **collaborating** in **multicultural spaces**.

How this course works



This is an **online, live** course of three weeks, running from 11th to 28th March, consisting of **9 hours of live instruction** and **3 hours of peer-to-peer** work.

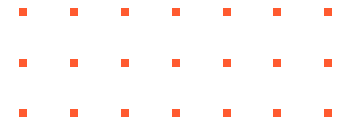
For the duration of the course, learners will also be included in an active **Telegram* group** for their cohort where **ongoing discussion** related to the course will be encouraged.

All classes run from **15:00 GMT until 16:00 GMT** (*please check what time that is in your country*). Classes are on **Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays** (*for the peer support sessions on Thursdays, the exact time is flexible and will be decided by you and your course-mates*). The platform we use for all sessions is **Zoom****.

** We use Telegram because it is widely available in different countries, and because group participants are not obliged to share their phone number with their cohort.*

*** We are open to using a different platform if it increases the accessibility of the course, please contact us at info@upskillingforchange.com if you feel a different platform would work better.*

Your English level



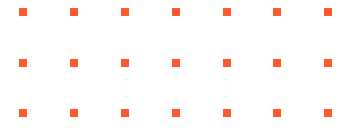
We ask participants on this course to have what is called a **‘professional working proficiency’**.

“Someone at this language proficiency level can make contributions to office meetings, have conversations with clients, and carry out most work functions requested of them.”
(Vipond, 2023).

If you can work, travel or ‘get by’ in English, but still feel that you **lack confidence**, or feel **uncomfortable**, or at a **professional or social disadvantage** because of your English abilities, then this course is made for you!



Class sizes



We have found that **6 to 10 adult learners** in a class is a good number to work with.

This number of people in a group means that we have enough **diversity** in **ideas**, **experiences**, and **perspectives** to create **meaningful discussion**, but it is a small enough number for us also to have a **respectful**, **spontaneous** exchange in which there is time and space for **everyone's voice to be heard**.

Your facilitator will ensure that questions are answered, language is **examined**, ideas are **considered**, **discussed** and **respected**, and that everyone leaves feeling **valued**, **heard**, and having learned new language and/or tools with which to improve your English language skills.



Your facilitators



There are three things that give Sahar joy in life; learning, teaching, and travelling!

Sahar has been an English learner since 1990 and an English teacher since 2008. She started her career teaching general English to adults in Iran. In 2018 she returned to the university from which she graduated, working as an English instructor at the Student Association of Language and supporting the Admissions Team in Engineering, helping students to submit their scientific articles. In 2019, she set up her online learning system UBlearner where her main mission is to create affordable and equal learning opportunities for English language learners from around the world.



**Sahar
Zolfaghari**

Sahar has completed TKT courses successfully and received training from renowned teacher trainers from Iran, Australia, and the United States. She also has an IELTS certificate (Academic module) with band score 8 in speaking. She has completed the ELTons award-winning teacher training 'Teaching English Online' by Cambridge Assessment English. Sahar has a Master's degree in System Engineering and is self-educated in Transactional Analysis (a psychoanalytic theory). She has recently finished her training in Coaching in Education with the Norwegian University of Science & Technology (NTNU), and in Facilitating Adult Learning Groups with Leigh Faulkner. She is currently an official member of the International Association of Facilitators.

Your facilitators



Fiona loves reading, walking, and is a proud mum to her one-year-old son.

Fiona has been teaching English since 2012. She started teaching business and general English to adults in Madrid where she also volunteered for 5 years teaching English language skills to people seeking asylum. In 2018 she returned to the UK and started working as a teacher, class coordinator, and then programme officer for Language Beyond Borders, supporting displaced people worldwide, refugees to Canada, and young graduates in Gaza with their English language skills, all online.



Fiona Locke

After that she worked with the YMCA in the south of England supporting young people who had dropped out of education before setting up her own online teaching business during the pandemic. In 2021 she helped found Upskilling For Change and has been working as activities coordinator there ever since.

Fiona has a TEFL teaching certificate and holds a CertHE in Spanish Language & Intercultural Communication, and a PGC in Applied Linguistics & TESOL. She is currently working on her dissertation in order to convert her PGC into a Master's degree. She is an experienced facilitator and holds professional qualifications in the areas of safeguarding, dialogue facilitation, and teaching learners with trauma. She speaks Spanish at an upper intermediate level and is learning Arabic.

Group classes

Emergent language

Group Session - General / Emergent Language

In this session, we'll come together for one hour for a free but guided discussion. We won't be using books in this course. Instead, we'll be working with '**emergent**' language. What that means is that the class will be based on the **language, ideas, and objectives** that **you bring** to the session.

Emergent, or 'emerging' language is "any unplanned language item that arises naturally during lessons that the teacher then chooses to focus on for clarification or modification" (*Chinn and Norrington-Davies, 2023*). Working this way means you have some **ownership** over the **content, direction** and **tone** of the session, and also that the language we work on is **directly relevant to you**. Teaching this way is becoming increasingly popular because it is a very effective way of learning and we are seeing really great results from this pedagogy in our learners: "this pedagogy is gaining traction year on year [and is] essential for language acquisition to occur" (*Chinn and Norrington-Davies, 2023*).

Weller, (2022) claims that this style of teaching and learning can "improve student accuracy, introduce new language and build rapport. It can also help [learners] to express themselves with **spontaneity, individuality** and **creativity**." So, if those are areas you would like to improve in, this might be the course for you.

Group classes

Sharing space

Group Session - Sharing Space

This session is about **opening up**, **building rapport**, **reflecting** on your own learning, learning from your course-mates, and allowing your brain the space and time it needs to absorb the learning from the rest of the course.

Many traditional classrooms and learning spaces use competitive methods to motivate students. However, this can very often have a negative effect on learners and contribute to issues such as speaking anxiety (*Akbar, Sofyan, and Damayanti, 2018*). Working with others in your cohort, **sharing ideas** and **strategies** as well as **challenges**, drawing on each other's **knowledge** and **learning**, and building a sense of **'team'** or **'solidarity'** not only feels much nicer, but actually helps you learn more, too!

These sessions, along with ongoing conversation in your Telegram group will help you to build a **sense of community**, and **feel supported** by your course-mates (instead of feeling in competition with them!)

Group classes

Values & principles

Group Session - Values & Principles

This group session revolves around a specific topic related to English learning which changes every week.

Having **open and honest** discussions about our **experiences**, **opinions**, and **perspectives** on these topics allow participants to practise and improve their English while also examining some of the injustices within English language learning and teaching.

Why is this important?

The affective filter (*Krashen, 1982*) is a concept that we talk about a lot in language teaching. It refers to the many factors outside of someone's academic capabilities which impact their ability to learn a language or perform well in lessons.

We might have negative associations with one or more aspects of the learning environment, we might be carrying feelings of **shame** or **inadequacy** due to what we perceive to be **past failings** in our attempts to learn the language, we may have **anxiety** around the **expectations** that are on us. In short, we adults come with baggage! All of these factors are proven to impact your ability to improve your language skills. (*Patrick, 2019*).

Values & Principles (*continued*)

Connecting with others in **safe spaces** where we can **openly discuss** the **imbalances** and **injustices** which may be impacting us when it comes to English will help us to understand these issues, see our place in relation to them, and **feel empowered** to identify and tackle them when they raise our affective filters.

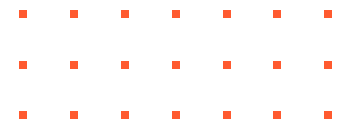
Additionally, the way you have been taught English in the past may well have been influenced by methodologies and approaches developed in different cultural contexts or ‘**meaning systems**’ (*Ellis, 1996*) to your own. ‘Meaning systems’ are specific sets of values, norms and expectations which will vary from one place to another.

There is evidence to suggest that transferring particular pedagogical practices from one meaning system to another can have a negative impact on the learning and create ‘**passive resistance**’ or ‘**non-learning**’.

In the past, English teachers have used methodologies or approaches developed in meaning systems where the **values** or **norms** may be different to those of the learners, which can cause **anxiety and stress** for the learner. Talking about this, understanding it and considering it with respect to our own learning experiences can help us understand why we might have particular **feelings or ideas** around our own abilities which are raising our affective filters and stopping us from **fulfilling our learning potential**.

1-2-1

Peer Support



This course is not like other courses.

You'll **think** about and **discuss** issues which have, and have had, a **real impact** on your **life**, your **learning**, your **career**, and your **access** to various **opportunities** and **information** throughout your life.

You'll **consider** and **talk** about the ways in which your previous education has impacted your **relationship to English**, how that has impacted your **confidence** at work or elsewhere, and how that has impacted your career progression, and even the effect that your English-language education has had on your **views** and **perspectives** around your own **language and culture**.

These are big topics.

We're serious about doing English-teaching differently because we know how important this language is to people.

The idea behind 1-2-1 Peer Support is to **connect** and **network** with others in your cohort who may have similar **experiences** and **feelings** around English. These sessions should give you the **space and time** you need to fully **explore your relationship** to the language, while also examining **other perspectives** on these issues.

We hope that by the end of this course, you'll have made some **real and lasting connections** who will be there to **support** you in your life-long learning journey.

Dates & times



Week 1

Monday 11th March 2024	15:00 - 16:00 pm (GMT)	Group Class - Values & Principles: <i>Profit-driven and unfair testing, and testing as gate-keeping</i>	Teacher Sahar (Fiona observing)
Tuesday 12th March 2024	15:00 - 16:00 pm (GMT)	Sharing Space	Teacher Sahar (Fiona observing)
Wednesday 13th March 2024	15:00 - 16:00 pm (GMT)	Group Class - General / Emergent Language	Teacher Fiona
Thursday 14th March 2024	TBD	1-2-1 Peer Mentoring	

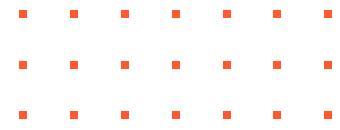
Week 2

Monday 18th March 2024	15:00 - 16:00 pm (GMT)	Group Class - Values & Principles: <i>The prevailing view of ELT as a profit-making industry</i>	Teacher Sahar (Fiona observing)
Tuesday 19th March 2024	15:00 - 16:00 pm (GMT)	Sharing Space	Teacher Sahar (Fiona observing)
Wednesday 20th March 2024	15:00 - 16:00 pm (GMT)	Group Class - General / Emergent Language	Teacher Fiona
Thursday 21st March 2024	TBD	1-2-1 Peer Mentoring	

Week 3

Monday 25th March 2024	15:00 - 16:00 pm (GMT)	Group Class - Values & Principles: <i>Lack of representation, and culturally inappropriate content</i>	Teacher Sahar (Fiona observing)
Tuesday 26th March 2024	15:00 - 16:00 pm (GMT)	Sharing Space	Teacher Sahar (Fiona observing)
Wednesday 27th March 2024	15:00 - 16:00 pm (GMT)	Group Class - General / Emergent Language	Teacher Fiona
Thursday 28th March 2024	TBD	1-2-1 Peer Mentoring	

What else is there to know?



■ What time are the Peer Support sessions?

Peer support sessions are organised between you and a course-mate and can be completed at any time during the day on each Thursday of each week. This will be explained more to you when you sign up, and at the start of the course.

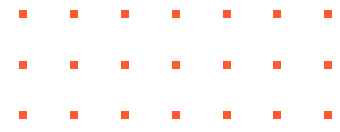
■ What other material is available?

Other materials including links, videos, and other resources will be available to you in order to support your learning, and to provide you with more information on the various issues which you'll discuss on the course. You'll also receive daily emails with interesting information and relevant reminders about your sessions.

■ How does the Telegram group work?

The Telegram group is there for the duration of the course for you to continue the discussions started in your sessions. Use it to share ideas, ask questions, consider other perspectives, share resources or discoveries, connect more with your course-mates, and anything else you want to do! It's your group. You even get to name it!

What else is there to know?



Do I get a certificate?

A letter and certificate of completion will be issued to you upon completion of this course if you attend and actively participate in all sessions. In return, we'll also ask for your feedback on the course. If you also need a reference or statement regarding your participation in this course, for your employer for example, we're happy to provide such things.

What's the cancellation policy?

If you find yourself unable to attend a session during the course, please contact us using the details which will be provided to you as soon as you are able to.

If you have paid for the course, but wish to withdraw your registration prior to the start of the course, full refunds will be given if notice is received before 29th February 2024.

Any other questions?

Please contact us using the details on the last page.

Fee and registration

To register your interest in this course, please email info@upskillingforchange.com with your **name in the email** and write **'Me & English'** in the subject line.

The cost of this three-week course is £90(GBP) per person. That covers:

- **9 hours** of live classes
- **3 hours** of peer support sessions
- **Daily emails** with useful **information** and **reminders** for the duration of the course
- **Bonus material** including **videos**, **links** and **worksheets**
- Inclusion in the group **Telegram** where your facilitators will be prompting you, giving you **feedback** and **discussing** with you **daily**, for the duration of the course.

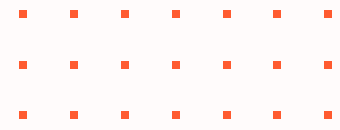
We welcome any questions and invite you to send them to info@upskillingforchange.com

We hope to one day bring you this and other courses for free, funded by larger organisations, educational establishments, governments or even your employer, but for now we are a very new and growing organisation, and we unfortunately have to ask you, the learner (or your employer) to pay for your place on this course.

The fee for this course has been carefully calculated to be **as fair as possible** to both **you, the learner**, and **your facilitators**, for their time and expertise. For this reason, we won't be offering discounts for groups, last-minute sales or promotional offers. **The fee is the same for everyone on the course, however and whenever it is paid.**

Thank you so much for taking the time to read about this course and about us, our **teaching**, our **ideas** and our **values**. **We are pushing for a revolution in English-language teaching** and we're glad to have you here with us on this journey.

Contact Information



✉ info@upskillingforchange.com

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