

Imagine

Close your eyes. Think about your dream vacation spot. For me, it's a house with a fireplace and a lot of books, built right next to some kind of water. The ocean, maybe. When I close my eyes, I can see details, from the shelves of books to the comfortable chair in front of the fireplace.

Of course, I don't *really* see these things, certainly not with my eyes closed. But I can draw a picture for myself in my mind, even though I've never been in a house like the one I described. I'm not 'remembering' the house, I'm imagining the house.

To imagine is the verb for what we do when we start thinking about things that aren't real. When I read a book—the kind with a story in it—I imagine the story in my head. I can see the people, almost like a movie.

If the things that I imagine—from the books I read, to how I think the future will be—are 'movies' then the movie theater that I watch them in is my 'imagination.' Your imagination is the part of your brain that helps you think of things that aren't real. Children who can imagine that the box they are playing with is really a palace, or a space ship, have a lot of imagination. Some people—normally, older people—say that they don't have very much imagination.

I think imagination is important, in general, but it's also good for learning English!

When you're learning English, I hope you aren't learning English just to learn it. You should have some kind of goal in mind: Maybe you want to travel in England, maybe you need to use English at work. Perhaps you're learning English because there is someone in particular you want to talk to.

Take a moment and close your eyes again. Imagine yourself speaking English perfectly. What are the things you'll talk about? Who are the people you'll talk to? This is a good start in triaging the words you need—or want—to learn. If you imagine yourself talking about the products you sell, do you need to learn the vocabulary for describing shoes?

When you imagine yourself speaking perfect English, what do you see yourself talking about? Who do you see yourself talking to? I want to know. I also want to know how you imagine your dream vacation spot. Is it anything like mine? What are the most important details?