

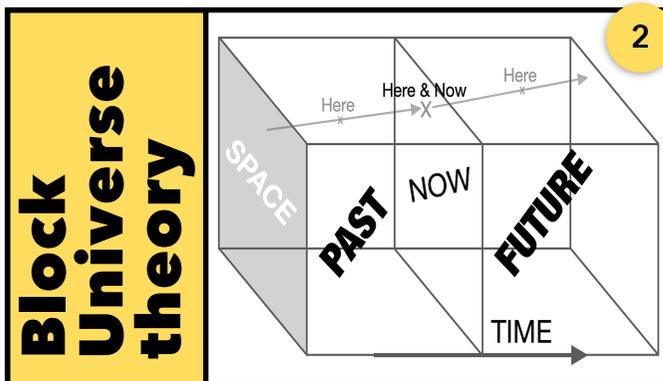
WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

Let's Use Time Travel to Improve Your English!

10/12/20 / Keyword: time travel

1

ECP coach Rob tries to reconcile free will and determinism to make it easier for you to achieve your goal of being better at English. Let's use time travel to study better!



2

3

WARNING: THIS ARTICLE CONTAINS SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY 😊

A statement I heard on a BBC [science podcast](#) the other day got me thinking: “No-one has ever been able to remember their future.”

Then, a little later, I saw a meme on Instagram that said: “He who can change his thoughts can change his future,” and I had a **brainwave**...

In a very, very basic manner, there are two ways of ‘understanding’ time. In the first, we perceive time as ‘passing’ as we move forward linearly into the future and leave the past behind. It means we are permanently in the present and our ‘future present’ is unknown (Presentism).

The other idea is that all time, in fact, exists *at the same time*. My ‘now’ is just another position within a huge ‘block of time’ (imagine a massive box - see left) that includes everyone’s nows, pasts and futures. The perception of time passing linearly is an illusion because we can, in theory, travel to any point of time in that ‘block’ (Block Universe theory).

Still with me? Great! I’d now like to offer an alternative narrative.

One that reconciles the ideas of free will (making decisions in your ‘permanent present’ that influence your ‘future present’) with determinism (living in that block of time where everything already

exists and so can’t be altered). I say this because I *feel* that I live in my own future. I have solid memories (the reality of memories is a discussion for another day) of when I came to Vitoria and of dreaming of how I wanted my life to develop here - my future career, home, partner, possessions and so on. Right now, I feel unequivocally immersed in that imagined future reality - my dreams came true. And that gives me hope that my current desires for my future will also materialise.

Perhaps, as a younger man, I was able to **glimpse** a view of my personal ‘block of time’ in my **daydreams** and hopes. Is it possible that those desires were, in fact, my mind ‘remembering’ my predestined future? Or perhaps, more simply, I just imposed those desires - through good planning, hard work and good luck - on to my **yet-to-be fulfilled** destiny. Who knows?

So here’s a thought experiment. We might not be able to jump around the block universe, exploring our lives non-linearly, but we could do the next best thing and *imagine* ourselves doing it. We could try to *see* our (theoretically) already-existing future.

Let’s imagine how fluent your English will be in 5 years’ time. Imagine yourself watching TV shows and news programmes, reading websites and books, socialising with and integrating into groups, all without problems. Sounds great, right?

Now, let’s accept the block universe (deterministic) view of time and accept that this fluency in English already exists in your life. It is happening right now, just at a different point. There is a point in time when you don’t have a good command of the

Useful vocabulary

free will: the power of acting without the constraint of necessity or fate; the ability to act at one’s own discretion.

determinism: the doctrine that all events, including human action, are ultimately determined by causes regarded as external to the will

brainwave: a sudden and clever idea or thought

to glimpse: to see or perceive briefly or partially

daydreams: pleasant thoughts that distract you from the present

yet-to-be fulfilled: not yet developed or completed

to grasp: to comprehend

the here and now: the present time

Let’s chat about !

1. Do you believe in free will or do you think everything is decided? Explain your ideas.
2. Do your beliefs influence how you act day-to-day? How?
3. Have you seen dreams you had when you were younger become reality? Which ones?
4. What dreams would you like to materialise? Are they realistic? Why (not)?
5. Choose one of your dreams and make a **forensic reconstruction** of it (see p2).

LIVE!English Events

Come and socialise in English!

An ECP LIVE!English event

SPORTS DIVE!

The 2nd Friday of every month: 18.30



Connect to ECP's Sports Dive event on **Friday 11th December** to chat about the latest events in the big wide world of sports! **18:30-19:30** See you there!

How to 'travel through time' to be better at English

Specific actions to improve specific skills and areas

Grammar, vocabulary, listening, reading etc



Specific actions to improve specific skills and areas.
Reading, writing, speaking, listening etc

- Remember the abilities of your 'past you'
- Appreciate the advances you have made
- Visualise your 'future you' and your improvements
- Describe your future abilities and skills
- Plan the required actions and necessary resources
- Take the first steps into your future!

language, there is 'now' and there is a point when you are comfortable communicating in English.

The next step is to draw a line through those past, present and future points (that all exist in one single 'block' remember). Now, let's remember (past) and imagine (future) what actions and steps you took along the line between those points. What happened on your journey through time? Let's create the narrative of your English journey! (see image below).

What's crucial to **grasp** here is the concept that this is not speculation about a *possible* future, this is a forensic reconstruction of your life. It *will have already happened* and we are simply deciding how it happens; *how you travel through time*. **The here and now** is the moment you decide what your future will be and if that future already *is* then we need to make sure that it's a good one!

It's time to make that forensic reconstruction of your personal 'block of time'. It's time to 'know' where you are in 5 years' time and to 'know' how you got there. It's time to take those steps that mean that you communicate comfortably in English in 2025. It's time to use time travel to freely follow your predetermined path to your happy 'future you'!

Written by ECP coach Rob Hextall

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