

How to Respond When People Don't Understand You

A2–B2 Confidence Lesson — By Lucas

1. Why It Matters

Every learner has moments where someone says:

- “Sorry?”
- “What did you say?”
- “Can you repeat that?”

This is normal — even native speakers misunderstand each other every day.

The problem is not the misunderstanding.

The problem is how **you react** to it.

If you freeze, apologize, or panic, the conversation becomes harder.

If you respond calmly with simple phrases, the conversation continues naturally.

2. Common Reaction Mistakes

- ✗ Apologizing too much
- ✗ Speaking faster because you feel stressed
- ✗ Switching to your native language immediately
- ✗ Saying “never mind” (this kills the conversation)
- ✗ Getting embarrassed and stopping the conversation

These reactions make communication harder, not easier.

3. Better, Natural Alternatives

Use these calm, confident responses when someone doesn't understand you:

Repeat with clarity

- “Sure, I'll say it again.”
- “Let me try that one more time.”

Rephrase with simpler words

- “I mean...”
- “Another way to say it is...”
- “I'm talking about...”

Check understanding politely

- “Is that clearer?”
- “Does that make sense?”

These phrases show confidence, not panic.

4. Mini-Drills (Practice These Out Loud)

Repeat each line slowly with a relaxed voice:

- “No problem, I’ll repeat it.”
- “Let me say that more clearly.”
- “I’ll use simpler words.”
- “Take your time — we’ll figure it out.”
- “This happens to everyone.”

Keep your tone calm and friendly — that’s what creates real confidence.

5. Quick Practice Challenge

Today’s task:

👉 If someone doesn’t understand you, **don’t apologize**.

Repeat or rephrase once using a simple, confident line.

Example:

“I’ll say it again more slowly.”

This small change builds real fluency and conversation control.

6. Outro / Next Lesson

Misunderstandings don’t mean your English is bad.

They simply mean you’re having a real conversation.

What you need is:

- calm reactions
- simple rephrasing
- clear rhythm
- and confidence

In the next lesson, we’ll build on this by learning how to **stay calm under pressure** and keep speaking even when you feel nervous.

