



TOP TIPS FOR LEARNING A LANGUAGE



1 FIND YOUR 'WHY'

Finding your motivation for learning a new language helps you work towards a goal, which will help you stay focused. You'll also get an immense sense of achievement when you realise how far you've come.

Why do you want to learn?

2 CHOOSE YOUR CONTENT

You could follow a French sports channel or read a bilingual storybook to your children. Learning through a hobby is a wonderful way to stay motivated and engaged. We learn better when we're fully engaged in an activity; you're more likely to remember food vocabulary if you go to a cookery class than if you stare at a list of words.

3 MAKE A FRIEND

Building a friendship with a native speaker is the best way to practise, and the surest way to make learning a language worthwhile. You'll enjoy the process and pick up ways of speaking that real people use everyday.



4 USE A RANGE OF RESOURCES

Embrace variety. You can find podcasts, radio stations, dictionaries, apps and TV shows online. Why not use local classes, language forums, friends, exchange partners or volunteering? Have you tried switching your phone into your target language? The more you can surround yourself with your target language, the quicker it will become familiar.



5 LEARN 100 WORDS

We only use around 1000 words day-to-day, and most of our conversation is made up of just 100 words. Focus your early learning on 100 key words and building your fluency around sentences and basic grammar. Learn 5-10 words at a time. Keep it simple. There will be time to expand your vocabulary later.

6 BE BRAVE!

Language needs to be processed, not just memorised, which means you need to USE it as much as possible. Use each new word in as many contexts as possible. Get out there and try and don't be afraid to make a bit of a fool of yourself. You might have to be a bit brave, but at least you're having a go.

7 JOIN A LANGUAGE CLASS

Classes give you something to structure your learning around, as well as providing you with expert teachers, a sociable way to practise, and a bit of accountability when you feel your motivation flagging.

Have you checked out our RefuLingua classes?

USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

Read on for a mixture of general or language-specific, paid and unpaid resources to cater to every level.

If you have anything you think we should add, please let us know! Links are correct as of February 2024.

Translation Tools

- Google Translate – use with caution. You can download languages to use the app offline, so it's useful for travelling.
- Reverso Context – trawls the internet for context-based translations
- Microsoft Translator – use your camera to translate text from a foreign language

Books

Arabic

- Jane Wightwick and Mahmoud Gaafar's *Mastering Arabic* series
- Standard Arabic Hans Wehr dictionary, now in app form! A deep dive into the Arabic root system...for serious language learning!
- Standard Arabic Arabic Stories for Language Learners by Brosh and Mansour
- Syrian Arabic – *Syrian Colloquial Arabic* – a functional course by Liddicoat, Lennane, and Abdul Rahim
- Arabic Reading and Writing – *The Key to Arabic/Gateway to Arabic* series by Dr Imran Hamza Alawiye

Somali

- *Teach Yourself Somali*, by Dr Qasim Farah

Farsi

- *Farsi for Beginners*, by Saied Atoofi
- *Farsi – The Routledge Intermediate Person Course*, by Brookshaw and Jadidi

Pashto

- *Pashto An Elementary Textbook*, by Rahmon Inomkhojaye

General

- New Penguin Parallel Text short story books – available in French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Chinese
- Assimil good old-fashioned textbook-style series, but not how you learnt at school...

USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

Websites and Apps

General

- <https://padlet.com/> – interactive online pinboards to share resources and learning
- <https://www.liveworksheets.com/> – a wide variety of worksheets in multiple languages
- <https://www.memrise.com/> – make, share, and revise vocabulary
- <https://www.duolingo.com/> – gamified language learning app – a good starting point
- <https://wordwall.net/> – make quizzes, games, card sorts etc
- <https://quizlet.com/> – make and partake in interactive quizzes
- <https://uk.mantralingua.com/> – bi-lingual storybooks in a huge variety of languages
- <https://natakallam.com/> – online language classes taught by refugees
- <https://www.clozemaster.com/> – cloze exercises in multiple languages
- <https://www.easy-languages.org/> – brilliant YouTube channel and website – multiple languages
- <https://www.lingq.com/en/> – large bank of language resources – payment needed to access full version
- <https://www.language-transfer.org/> – one man's (impressive!) attempt to offer free language learning podcasts to the world
- <https://apps.ankiweb.net/> – your absolute go-to website for flashcards
- <https://www.busuu.com/dashboard> – a little like Duolingo but with videos. Browser friendly. Pay for full access.
- www.italki.com – find language tutors online
- <https://www.tandem.net/> – matches you with a language exchange partner
- <https://www.michelthomas.com/> – aural language learning from before the Internet was a thing...
- <https://pimsleur.com/> – we haven't tried this one but their PR is good. If you use it, send us a review...

Arabic

- <https://www.livingarabic.com/> – dictionary resource for Arabic – dialects and Fusha!

Russian

- <https://translate.yandex.com/en/translator/English-Russian> – useful for translating just about any language into/from Russian
- <https://www.russianthroughpropaganda.com/> – learn Russian through propaganda and art – fun!