



Internet TO LEARN A LANGUAGE

The Internet provides great **freedom of choice**, offering a wide range of resources; however, it is advisable to identify the right strategy to make the most of these very versatile resources.

The Internet, with its **multimedia, interactive and interdisciplinary features**, offers opportunities for combining study and leisure!

Here is some useful advice:

- 1) Try to understand your own learning style and why you want to learn the language. This will allow you to **set yourself realistic goals** and understand what is useful to study: you don't need to know everything!
- 2) Select and create your own **personal list of sites and apps** (many are free of charge) among those that best match your own needs and interests.
- 3) Alternate grammar and vocabulary exercises with time dedicated to "edu-recreational" activities such as:
 - listening to **audiobooks, audio-stories, audio-fairy tales**. Some sites allow you to **download free podcasts and mp3s** so you can listen to them at any time;
 - **reading newspapers and magazines on line**; you may also find slowly read audio-newscasts, together with a transcript and glossary explaining recurring terms in the journalistic language used;
 - **watching films or news broadcasts** choosing from the **many Web TVs available** on the network;
 - **listening to the radio and songs**: Songs are useful for listening to pronunciation and rhythm. There are sites offering transcriptions of the text and comprehension exercises. Try to transcribe the text using the audio track as a dictation;
 - **practicing with the recipe** of a typical dish from various culinary traditions by visiting the many cooking sites that offer video-recipes;
 - **searching for websites with topics of personal interest** (e.g. sports, cinema, travel etc.)
- 4) Strive to **repeat phrases, words and expressions out loud**: this will improve your pronunciation and increase your confidence in the spoken language. The native mother-tongue speakers of TV broadcasts, of films or clips on YouTube can serve as models to follow: pay particular attention to the gestures and to pronunciation as well as intonation.
- 5) Through the internet you will be able to connect with mother-tongue speaking people: contact **tandem-virtual partners and exchange emails with them, chat with them via webcam or call them on Skype**, as well as participating in discussions on topics of interest in virtual forums etc;
- 6) Almost all the online courses offer **model dialogues** for many of the typical situations one encounters in daily life, allowing you to learn useful expressions, (e.g. make a telephone call, asking for information by post or at the bank, etc.).
- 7) The Internet allows you to **repeat** the same exercise and use the same resource topics over again several times; in addition, it provides an opportunity for you to test your progress through on-line tests.

Our dedicated online resource page offers some useful suggestions for learning through the internet.

There is no "standard recipe" for learning a new language that works for everyone, but the "secret ingredients" to success are always: **passion, motivation... and consistency; just a few minutes a day!**



COMIC BOOKS TO LEARN A LANGUAGE

- 1) To get started, **it may be useful to choose a comic you already know.**
- 2) At first concentrate on the **images** and **pictures**: what are your first impressions? What assumptions can you make on the content of the comic?
- 3) Read the comic for the first time, without worrying about understanding everything. **Let yourself be transported** by the story and the images: they can help you get a general idea of the story.
- 4) Now try to **capture the first impressions** about the comic and what struck you most: the graphics, the characters, the story. Try to find keywords and then write them down.
- 5) Try to cover up some of the cartoons and describe what happens **between one scene and the next**: this is a good exercise in oral expression!
- 6) Look carefully at characters: each has a different personality, a different way of expressing themselves and particular different gestures and expressions. In your own words, **try to describe the characters** (physical appearance, personality, role in the story) using adjectives, synonyms and opposites.
- 7) Now work on the **dialogues** between the characters: try to deduce the meaning of the words you don't know from the context, check them in a dictionary and make a note of new terms or words in a notebook, adding phrases and examples so you can remember them easily.
- 8) The language used in comics is that of everyday speech, made up of exclamations, broken sentences, onomatopoeias and so-on. It is mainly characterised through the use of **direct speech**. Try to transform the comic into a story by using **indirect speech instead**.
- 9) Try to attribute **an adjective** to the moods expressed by the characters in the comic by means of interjections the interjections such as ahh, grr, oh dear,...

If you want to learn a language, it is important to be consistent! It only takes 15 - 20 minutes a day!

If you liked working with comic books, look for others you can use: advice is available from the **references and tutors**. Ask the Multilingual Centre or Mediateca front-office for a free appointment!



AUDIOBOOKS TO LEARN A LANGUAGE

- 1) The choice of audiobooks ranges from children's stories and literature to easy-to-follow audiobooks in CD format and online (podcasts). To get started, you can **search for a story you already know or an easy-to-follow audiobook**.
- 2) Listen to the story for the first time, without worrying about understanding each word; get involved in the **rhythm** of the story: in many cases the intonation and the context help to understand what is being said.
- 3) Listening to it a second time will enable you to pick up more elements, enter the plot, **imagine** the characters and **visualise** the setting that forms the backdrop for the story.
- 4) Language is absorbed through two channels: the visual and auditory channels. The audiobook text can assist you in listening: **reading what you hear** allows you to give written form to sounds and to understand how a word is pronounced.
- 5) Now that you know the content of the story, try to read a passage aloud while recording your performance: this is called **a simultaneous reading**. Occasionally you may find the text runs ahead of you, but with practice you'll be able to keep up!
- 6) Pausing the CD allows you to make a note of key **words and expressions** and use them to tell the content of the audiobook out loud or to another person.
- 7) Another exercise is to stop the audio playback and try to complete it **in your own words**.
- 8) **Listening to the audio book with two or more** people gives you the opportunity to discuss your understanding of the story, clarify any doubts, ask each other questions, possibly even in the language of the audio book.

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FILM TO LEARN A LANGUAGE

- 1) It's hard to say which films are the easiest to understand... Choosing a **familiar film** and using **subtitles** in the language of the film can be a great help. If you choose a film shot or set in the country where they speak the language you want to learn, you will discover many aspects of the original culture through the images.
- 2) To **prepare** for watching the film, you can search for information about the plot, the director, etc. On the Internet you will find sites both in your language and in the language you are learning: this is an opportunity to take advantage of!
- 3) Watch the film and don't worry if you don't understand everything. **Get involved** with the images and the story: the intonation, the facial mimicry and the gestures of the actors will be of great help in the general understanding of the story.
- 4) As you watch the film, write down the **words and expressions** that strike you or that you want to learn more about later. A DVD can easily be paused to read or copy part of the subtitle.
- 5) To focus on the individual **phrases** and on the **pronunciation** of words, we suggest you follow a scene with your eyes closed. Or watch a scene with the volume turned off and try to recite the dialogue between the characters. Then compare your version with the original!
- 6) If the film does not have subtitles, look for a section you like and try to **write the subtitles yourself**. This exercise is very useful for improving listening skills, understanding and producing written text.
- 7) Watching the film with **another person** can be an opportunity to exchange views, ask questions and help each other understand the content.
- 8) Another exercise could be **describing** orally or in writing a character or the setting of the film.
- 9) **Films are a window on the world**, able to show us distant people, places, cultures and traditions up close. They will bring you closer to the authentic customs, colours and sounds, to the everyday language used and even to dialect expressions.
- 10) **Languages at the Cinema**: this is a free initiative that presents films in the original language with subtitles and introduced by an expert in languages and cinema. Ask the front-office for the program! In addition, the language cards of the films presented are available online.

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SONGS AND MUSIC TO LEARN A LANGUAGE

- 1) Music is an excellent and effective tool for learning languages in a fun way.
- 2) Song lyrics are an inexhaustible source of words, phrases and expressions. Listening to music in a language other than our own makes it easier to learn the correct **pronunciation**.
- 3) To start with, choose songs you already know and like: the music you like listening to is very useful for memorising words thanks to **repeated listening**. Each song has repetitive words and refrains that are easily imprinted in the mind. Of course, the song lyrics should be clear and understandable, especially if you are starting to learn the language.
- 4) **Write** the song title on a sheet of paper before you listen to it. What could it be about? What words or expressions come to your mind in the foreign language?
- 5) **Play and listen the song for the first time.** What emotions does the song convey? Take notes about this, if possible in the language of the song.
- 6) **Listen to the song a second time,** paying attention to the rhythm of the sentences, pronunciation and intonation of the words. What did you understand? Make a note of the subject of the song, any key words and phrases you understand. Does the song tell a story? What does it describe?
- 7) Listen to the song again and **read the lyrics** in a booklet or on the Internet. Reading what you hear enables you to give written form to sounds and understand the spelling. Is the text clearer to you now that you have read the words? Do your initial notes make sense?
- 8) Repeat or sing the words **aloud**. Recite the song as if it were a poem, trying to reproduce the sounds and the rhythm you heard before exactly. Record your voice while you do this exercise and then listen to it again and compare it with the original.
- 9) You can also search for subtitled **video clips**, or even use karaoke!
- 10) **Look up** the words you don't know in a dictionary. Make a note of them with their meaning and study their context. How and when are these words used? Search for derived or related words, synonyms and opposites.

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If you liked working with music, look for other CDs or songs on line: advice is available from the **references and tutors**. Ask the Multilingual Centre or Mediateca front-office for a free appointment!