

Advice on improving your writing skills in another language

Learning how to write a foreign language well can be more complicated than speaking it. Your grammar needs to be correct and the words you use appropriate to the concept you want to express.

Here are a few suggestions, strategies and techniques to improve your writing skills in another language.

Read a lot

The more you read, the more you increase your passive language knowledge, use your memory and analytical thinking skills and extend your vocabulary. It is useful to read texts of various types - newspapers, novels, essays, scientific articles - in order to help you absorb new words and expressions and new ways of building sentences.

Newspapers and magazines offer a chance to choose the themes closest to your personal tastes. The international press is present online in a range of formats: the great variety of subjects dealt with and available sources will help you to learn the various linguistic registers.

<https://biblioweb.medialibrary.it>

Online there are many sites to suit all personal interests.

There are **various sorts of books**, including simplified books, to make reading truly a pleasure.

It is useful and fun to also watch films and TV series in the language you're learning, with **subtitles**.

Extend your vocabulary by creating a personal dictionary

Try **not to translate** from your native language: to express concepts clearly you must try to think up your sentences directly in the language you're learning.

It is also important to consult **reference sources (dictionaries and grammar books)** whenever you have doubts on spelling, grammar rules or syntax. In particular monolingual dictionaries are a great help in getting you thinking in a foreign language, finding synonyms, and improving your understanding of words in context. Using audio texts for dictation can also provide good spelling practice.

Request clarification from native speakers: if you don't know any native speakers there are language exchange communities where you can find people available to correct what you write and give you an opinion on the aspects in need of improvement.

While you're reading it is very useful to **note down particularly effective or unusual words and expressions** that you want to re-use.

You can assimilate **ten or so new words a day**, although you'll need to go over those you've already learnt every day.

Gather **examples of texts for various situations:** emails, info requests, complaints, etc.

And then...

practice all the time

Initially, it's best to use **simple, brief sentences** where the grammatical and syntactical accuracy is easier to check.

It is useful to prepare a **plan as a basis for the composition of your text**.

Making a **written summary** of a text you have read or listened to is a very useful exercise. It could be a book, a film, a newspaper article or even an account of your day (a personal diary, for example).

To practice a **range of styles** (formal, informal, etc.) try writing out the same contents in different ways.

Rereading what you have written after a while enables you to identify errors and improve your style.

Make a list of your most frequent errors to avoid repeating them.

Use every available opportunity to practice your writing: online chat helps you to practice a rapid, concise style, keeping or taking part in a blog enables you to write about themes of interest to you.

If you intend to sit a **language certification** exam it is very useful to consult previous exam papers.

Lastly, you need plenty of **creativity!** Let yourself be inspired by a word you've just learnt, an episode you've read about, a memory, a scene which triggered a particular feeling in you, a person whose story you can imagine... Happy writing!