

## *Top tips for learning a foreign language*

It is common knowledge that the golden rule for learning a foreign language is **constant practice**. For this reason, it is highly recommended to try to use the foreign language everyday by introducing it in our daily routine.

First of all, the best way to successfully learn a foreign language is by expanding our comfort zone or, what is the same, by **taking risks**. However, it is not easy because it does not only demand a lot of hard work but also attitude. It means that we don't have to be afraid of making mistakes and leaving our comfort zone.

Following that, when we reach a point in which we know enough grammar and vocabulary to get by, we should go a step further in order to improve. For instance, do not worry if you do something new, just believe in your skills and enjoy learning the language. As it is commonly said: "no pain, no gain".

Finally, to get the most from our language practice is basic and, of course, we can do it combining work and pleasure. A good way to do this would be discovering the culture and the traditions of the place where the target language is spoken.

When it comes to **speaking**, it is not always easy to find someone to speak with, so you can have what we call *shower* or *car conversations*, which consist in talking to yourself aloud. It's also an interesting way to notice where your weaknesses are and work on them. On-line or in-person conversation groups are good tools to introduce yourself into speaking with small groups.

Furthermore, you can take advantage of tourists visiting your area and approach them while they are queuing at Dali museum. Practising your speaking having an informal conversation will raise your self-confidence as well.

In order to enhance your **writing** skills, you could try to follow some of the following tips. Joining English blogs or forums about a topic of your own interest would be an engaging way to express your ideas and get feedback.

Moreover, if you have a Facebook or Twitter account or any other social network, you can join and give your opinion about a singer, a football team, an actor and so on... and it will help to improve your writing skills. This is called: FANBASE. If Fanbase is not your cup of tea and you like travelling, you have another option called WWOOFing (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms). This is a network of national organizations where you can log in and arrange your "holidays" in a farm in an English speaking country. While making all your arrangements with the host people, you will practise your writing a lot.

Regarding **listening**, we consider that it is important to highlight that we need to listen to the new language and get used to its musicality. For instance, we could listen to the radio or watch films in original version (with English subtitles). In fact, we should listen as much as we can (TV, radio, cinema, podcast, audio books, music...) in order to get used to the new sounds. It could sound typical but it never gets old when

you have to learn a language. As a matter of fact, the rhythm helps to memorize things a bit faster.

Downloading podcasts or visiting websites such as "Ted talks" or historical documentaries in "Chronos media" can be your best choice: not only will you gain new knowledge on a specific topic, but also on English at the same time.

Lastly, another piece of advice might be to join free tours when you are visiting a foreign city because it is a good way to interact with English speakers and, consequently, you are also forced to use English as a means of communication.

Related to **reading** you should read as much as possible. Doing this, not only will you improve your reading comprehension, but also your writing skills. For example, you could read books, magazines or newspapers in English which include topics you are interested in. A good example would be the last section of El Punt Diari because it is written in English and deals with local matters. Furthermore, you can use the English version of Wikipedia when you search for information online.

To finish, let us give you a piece of advice about different ways to improve your **vocabulary**. To start with, you should get used to using either online or traditional dictionaries, such as *Wordreference* or *Collins English Dictionary*. If you are a beginner you can use a bilingual dictionary too. Second, you could memorize a number of words per day related to topics you like and try to introduce them in your daily speech. Last but not least, you can write your shopping list and even your daily planning in English.

*That's all folks! We hope you find these tips useful.*