

Pep Talk

*Inspiration to
get pumped!*

DAMON & JO

How to learn a language
from home (7:06)

PICK UP LIMES

I had to learn a language
in 7 days (16:45)

EASY GERMAN

Manuel says Hello from
India (7:42)

Methodology

JOHNNY HARRIS

The fastest way to learn a new
language: The video game
map theory (23:34)

NATHANIEL DREW

The fastest way to learn a new
language: The solar system
theory (14:46)

TEDX

How to learn any language in
six months (18:26)

RESOURCES

Build up your own language
learning tool kit by looking for
websites, books, and
worksheets from cultural
organizations and universities.
Hit up the children's section of
a bookstore or your local
library.

Language Learning

Starting from scratch

LEARN CONVERSATIONAL PHRASES

1. Focus on frequently used phrases instead of a list of random vocabulary words. This helps to start practicing earlier on. Learn how to introduce yourself, say goodbye, thank someone. These all take no more than 10 minutes! I've found the @EasyLanguages resources to be super helpful.

MASTER COMMON WORDS

2. Search for a list of the most common verbs, nouns, and adjectives and learn them! Consider an excel sheet (Nathaniel Drew's solar system theory), playing games (Quizlet), and making personalized flash cards (i.e. a photo of your brother for the word "brother").

SENTENCE STRUCTURE

3. Placing words in the correct order is tough! I've found myself improving by listening to the same audio clip or video multiple times. Having a pen pal also motivates me to practice making sentences myself. I try to write each sentence on my own before turning to an online translator or dictionary.

MAKE IT CONVENIENT

4. Set your browser home screen to the website of a language learning game, news website, or online flash card set.

Place sticky notes throughout the house and label your items in a foreign language.

Learn words for the days of the week, holidays, and other common events in your life by setting up your agenda or bullet journal in a different language.

PERSONALIZE IT

5. Monitor your media: look for content and hobbies you enjoy in that language (for me: cooking tutorials and shows, Harry Potter books, news, camera reviews, travel shows, vlogs, worship music).

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

6. Use the language as often as possible, with as many people as possible, as early as possible (this is where learning conversational phrases early on helps). Don't hesitate because of the fear of making mistakes! Consider each mistake as a risk, and associate each risk as a push to grow.

We learn slowly but forget quickly, so keep at it, as much as you can handle, as often as possible.

Remember, it takes time!

Tips

FROM MY GERMAN PEN PAL, WHO HAPPENS TO BE AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER!

Set little goals and one big goal (i.e. learning Norwegian while saving up to visit Norway).

Find a source of intrinsic motivation. Why do you want to learn this language? Why is this important to you?

There are three principles which help to get better at a language: the length of time you spend learning a language, frequent use of the language, and frequent input. When watching a film, stop it periodically and repeat what the character said. This helps a lot with pronunciation. I also find writing letters with a pen pal a very motivating opportunity to practice a foreign language.

Maintenance

EXPAND YOUR VOCABULARY

1. Continually consume entertainment and media about a topic of interest in another language (for me: movies, tv shows, YouTube videos, books, news, podcasts, music, devotionals, sermons, articles and books about nutrition and migration). What do you want to communicate to others about, and what words do you need to do so?

PURSUE CONVERSATIONS

2. Constantly search for opportunities to use the language as often as possible. Find a pen pal. Volunteer your skills. Use it in restaurants, workplaces, etc. Do you have international friends who you typically speak to in English?

THINK IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

3. Shake up your defaults. For example, set your phone to a new language (learn how to change it back first!)

CULTURAL IMMERSION

4. Spend some time in places where the language is spoken. You might not have to travel as far as you think.

Learn about cultures and celebrate their holidays.

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS

5. I'm all for the free, creative ways to learn languages - and there are plenty. Still, there's something to be said about the unique intrinsic motivation that comes from a financial commitment. Consider investing in digital resources (apps, courses, Patreon), enrolling in community college courses, taking tests to assess your proficiency level, and become a certified interpreter.