

HOW TO STUDY A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

In every level of foreign language, students need to learn new vocabulary and verb forms. Students do not all learn in the same way. Students should

**HEAR the words to be memorized,
SAY them out loud,
and then WRITE them.**

Studies show that the more frequently a student reviews his vocabulary and verbs, the longer she will remember these words. Therefore foreign language students are encouraged to try a variety of study methods and to review previously learned material often. The following study techniques are recommended.

1. **Write the new vocabulary word several times.** Be sure to copy it correctly. Pay special attention to accents and genders.
2. **Make small vocabulary flashcards** to fit in your pocket. Put the English meaning on one side and the foreign language word on the other. Practice aloud if possible. Practice often. Shuffle the cards as you practice. Practice until you can say the words on each side as quickly as you can flash the cards. Make separate piles of the words you know, need to practice more, need to practice a lot. Before a test, put your cards down in rows on a table. As you look at each card, **write** the meaning of the word you see on a separate sheet of paper. Check your answers carefully. Write several times any words you misspelled.
3. **To make a vocabulary list,** fold and crease a sheet of paper lengthwise. On one side of the crease, write the foreign word; on the other side write the English meaning. Cover one side. Look at the other. Say the word you see. Try to say the translation. Uncover the word. If you are right, move on to the next word. If you are wrong, say the correct translation several times and then begin all over again at the top of your list. Practice both sides until you can move up and down the page rapidly.
4. **Word associations and other tricks.** Look for the “little” word you know in the “big” word. For example “cat” and “or” in the Spanish word “catorce.” Make up a phrase, jingle, or story for your vocabulary words whenever you can.
5. **Pretest.** When you think you know your vocabulary, give yourself a pre-test. Check your answers and write correctly several times any words you have misspelled.

6. **Quiz orally.** Ask someone (your parents, brother, sister, etc.) to quiz you orally and **in writing**. They can help even if they don't know the language.
7. **Make a test tape.** Record your vocabulary list in the foreign language and in English. Listen to it several times. Then replay the tape again and try to "beat" the tape translation.
8. **Talk to other students.** Find out how they study the words. They may be able to help you.
9. **Use the words whenever possible!** You must practice speaking in order to learn any language!

How can parents help their child learn a foreign language?

1. Encourage your child to teach you words that s/he has learned.
2. Point out articles on items in the news having to do with foreign countries.
3. Before vocabulary tests, ask him/her words in English and have her/him say and write the words in the target language.
4. Before a chapter test or quiz, have him/her explain the material.
5. Encourage her/him to read out loud and to use the target language at the dinner table, in the car, etc.
6. Watch foreign language movies and/or television programs.
7. Be enthusiastic about what they are learning.
8. Encourage him/her to use the target language with her/his friends. (This may be difficult for the parent, but it is the best motivator for your child!)
9. Invite your child to use the language with native speakers.
10. Applaud what s/he knows. Remember that it takes years to learn a foreign language. Don't expect fluency after one year.