

HOW TO STUDY A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Hola

Bonjour

Jambo

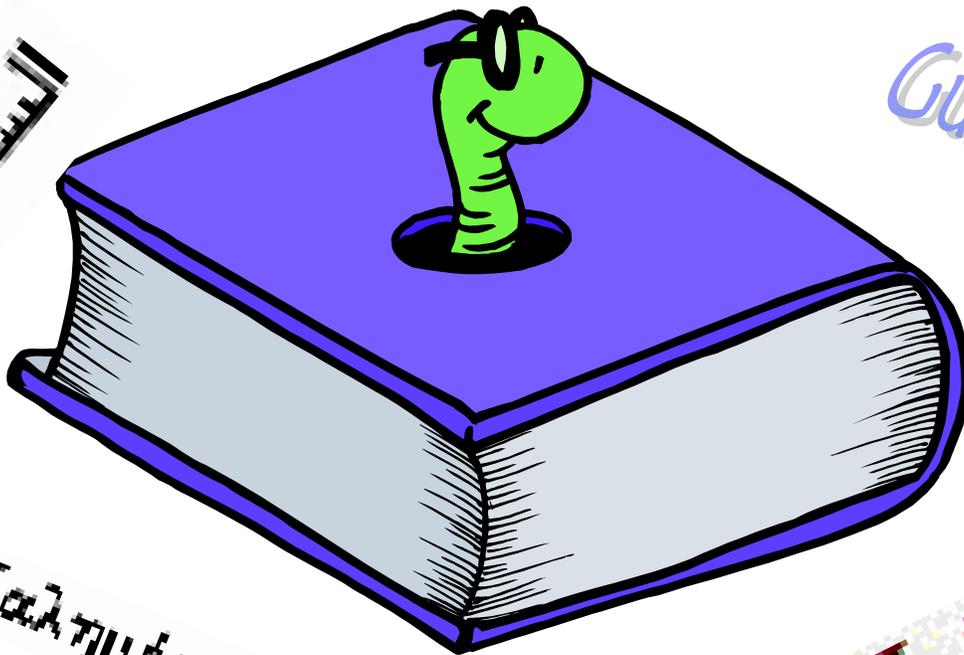
السلام عليكم

Guten Tag

Εαλημέρα

你好

你好





Links to Adolescence

Adolescence is a time of **change**. Students are developing biologically, cognitively (mentally), and socially. This resource guide will deal with the area of **cognition**.

During this period of growth and change, students learn to think about how they think. This is called **metacognition**. Because young adults are able to think about their thoughts, they can monitor their own learning processes. They can use strategies for remembering and problem solving and find methods of studying that work best for them personally.

It is also during this time that the ability to pay attention and **memory abilities** increase. Both of these are important in order to study effectively.

Finally, students see changes in **organizational strategies**. This is related to cognition. By knowing how they think and learn, students can plan and strategize their study sessions to meet their personal style and needs.

As an adolescent grows and changes, their study habits need to develop as well. This guide will offer some tips and strategies that students might find helpful.



Introduction

This Resource guide is for students learning a new language. There are tips for studying in general and there are study tips specific to foreign language. Most of the strategies in this guide have been used by my friends and me at points in our school careers and we consider them to be effective. Some of the ideas are from outside resources and “experts.” There are shelves full of books and internet sites full of information on study skills. This is in no way a complete guide, but hopefully it will get you started. There is no one way to study. What works for one will not work for another. Try these methods and find a few that work best for you. Try modifying them to fit the situation or your style.

How to Use It

This guide is not a novel. Don’t sit and read through it and put it away somewhere to get dusty. Keep it on hand when you are studying to refer to until you establish your personal strategies. After a while try something new to entertain your brain and keep your study skills sharp.

Do read the general section to get you started. It will help to prepare to study and establish techniques you can use for other classes. Read the “Things to Remember” and “Why study a Foreign Language” pages to help you stay on track and to help keep you from getting frustrated.

Pick study tips that fit your style. For example, if you need to see it to learn it, try the study tips that use a lot of pictures and colors. If you try something and it doesn’t work for you, no worries. Pick something different. The trick is finding a few that work for you and then using them. It doesn’t help if you know what to do, but don’t do it.



Things to Remember

Here are a few things to remember during your study of a foreign language.

- ❖ ***Patience***- Learning a language takes time. Even after years of study, most people will not be fluent without being submerged in the culture and surrounded by the language for an extended period of time. Don't get frustrated if you're struggling. You'll get it!
- ❖ ***Persistence***- Language learning requires hard work. That doesn't mean it can't be enjoyable. It can be frustrating, but the first time you realize you understand or have a conversation, it's all worth it.
- ❖ ***Pronunciation*** – The point of language is to communicate. If you cannot be understood, communication can't take place. Correct pronunciation is very important. Do everything you can to sound like a native speaker. Mimic their pronunciation and try to eliminate your American accent. Be careful with the vowels.
- ❖ ***Practice***- To learn another language you have to practice it. Just coming to class won't cut it. Practice makes permanent.
- ❖ ***Place of Origin***- If you are having trouble understanding a native speaker, keep these things in mind:
 - You may not know enough yet. It is okay, you're learning.
 - People from different countries or even regions of the same country may have different rates of speech, local vocabulary and slang, pronunciation, and intonation. You may not be used to this dialect or style.



Why Study a Foreign Language?

- ❖ So you can finally understand **lines** in songs, commercials, and movies that aren't in English.
- ❖ You can write in your **journal** in the foreign language for extra privacy.
- ❖ You get to choose a funky foreign **name**.
- ❖ Two words: **Food** Day.
- ❖ We live in an international **business** market.
- ❖ The two strongest indicators of **success** in **college** are courses in math and foreign languages.
- ❖ **Free** college credit and advanced placement.
- ❖ **Moneymoneymoneymoney**.
- ❖ Foreign **Friends**. COOL!
- ❖ Road **trip**!
- ❖ Language knowledge helps you find **information** (untranslated) that otherwise would be unavailable.
- ❖ Mandela said that the fastest way to a person's **heart** is to speak their language.
- ❖ It's learning to **communicate**, which is important no matter what you're going to do in life.





Getting Motivated

Doing homework is not the same as studying. Homework can be done with the book and notes and doesn't necessarily mean you *know* the material when you are done. You are more familiar with it and have practiced it, but more than likely you have not mastered the material.

Before beginning to study, it is a good idea to ***determine*** how much ***mastery*** of the material you want to have. This will determine how hard you need to study. For example, if you only wanted to get a better grade in class you would study less than if you wanted to be able to speak fluently. After you establish your desired level of mastery, write out some goals.

It is said that if you won't take the time to write down what you want to do, you will never take the time to actually do it. This is where ***goals*** come in. It is important to ***write goals*** down because they help you stay focused. Here are a few tips for writing your own:

Goals must be

- ❖ ***Specific***. Describe what you want to accomplish with as much detail as possible.
- ❖ ***Measurable***. Describe your goal in terms that can be clearly evaluated.
- ❖ ***Attainable***. Take energy and discipline to accomplish, but are realistic and actionable.
- ❖ ***Relevant***. A goal that is important to YOU.
- ❖ ***Time bound***. Don't give yourself until forever to complete it because that is how long you will take to do it. Give yourself a deadline to keep you motivated.

Sample Goal: I will raise my grade from a 75% to and 85% by the end of the grading period.



Getting Prepared

To be able to study effectively you need to *be prepared*. Before cracking the books, it is a good idea to evaluate yourself and your surroundings. Ask yourself these questions:

- ❖ **What does my study *environment* look like?** A good study area will have the "*tools of the trade*": dictionaries/thesaurus, books, notes, notebooks with plenty of paper, pens with lots of ink, sharpened pencils, etc., basically anything you need to help you study effectively or complete your work. It should have a desk, plenty of floor space (if that's how you like to study), or *a firm writing surface*. In addition to a firm surface to write on, make sure you have plenty of *light*. Too much or too little light can strain your eyes, cause headaches, and use up your energy. Try to find a *clean*, de-cluttered spot. A clean spot is less distracting and helps you stay organized.
- ❖ **What are *possible DISTRACTIONS* that would interrupt my study time?** Many things that you don't normally think of can be distracting during study times. Stopping to get more supplies, telephone calls and texts, pop in visitors, social media, time constraints, radio, TV, etc. can all take your focus off studying. Try

to *eliminate* all *distractions* before you start. Turn off any electronic devices and let family know that you need to be left alone to study.

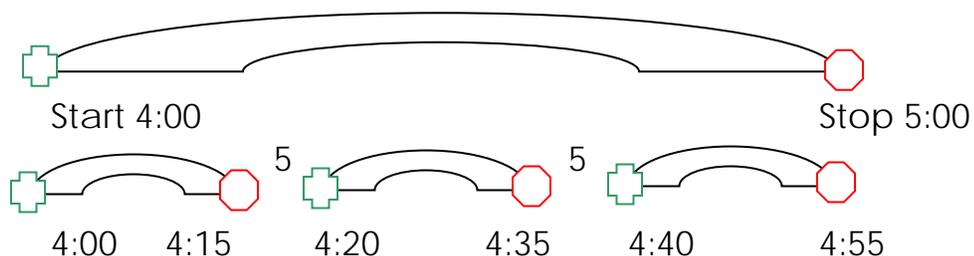
- ❖ **Am I ready to study?** Several personal things can be a distraction. Take for example your clothing. If you are *comfortably dressed* your focus and attention won't be interrupted. Hunger and a growling stomach can also draw your attention away from your work. It is okay to *eat a light snack* before studying. However, avoid a heavy meal that might make you sluggish or sleepy.



Start Studying

Now that you are prepared to study, you're ready to start! Here are some tips to help you.

- ❖ Learn to **manage your time**. Don't try to cram in weeks of information in to an hour or two in one evening. It's stressful, you don't retain as much, and consequently you forget what you studied after you take the test or write the paper. Your mind needs time to absorb all the information you're bombarding it with. It is better to **study a few minutes a day for several days** than to study for several hours on one day. Break down big projects in to smaller chunks over a longer period of time.
- ❖ Learn the **law of firsts and lasts**. Your brain tends to remember the first and last things in a series. The things in the middle tend to get forgotten. This holds true for when you are studying. For this reason you should **take short breaks (2-5 minutes) every 15-20 minutes** to increase the number of firsts and lasts. For example, if you study for an hour straight you have one start and one stop. If you study for three 15 minute periods with a five minute break between each period, you have three firsts and three lasts. You learn more in less time.



This law of firsts and lasts also applies to what you study. If you need to study a long list, break it down in to smaller lists of 3-7. Again this increases the number of firsts and lasts, and employs another method called chunking. If you read or study your notes or the text from beginning to end all the time, you will remember the material at the beginning and

end better than the middle. **Start studying from the middle** of your notes or the text from time to time.

- ❖ Learn to **take notes**. Taking notes is important because they help you stay focused in class, are there for review, and it uses all three modalities (hearing, seeing, and feeling/touching). This way you are applying all your abilities to strengthen your learning. There are numerous methods of note-taking. The main idea behind it is to put the most important points down on paper. Some people **write down main words phrases** and then as soon as possible after class they rewrite their note and fill in the gaps. Others out line the lecture while others do concept maps. Ask your teacher/tutor/ an older, successful student to help. You can also go on line to see examples. Check out this website for more help. <http://studygs.net>

- ❖ Learn to **read the textbook**. It will help you understand **what the teacher is talking about and reinforce what you're** learning. Try using the SQ3R method.

Survey! Question! Read! Recite! Review!	
Before you read, <u>S</u>urvey the chapter:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the title, headings, and subheadings • captions under pictures, charts, graphs or maps • review questions or teacher-made study guides • introductory and concluding paragraphs • summary
<u>Q</u>uestion while you are surveying:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn the title, headings, and/or subheadings into questions; • Read questions at the end of the chapters or after each subheading; • Ask yourself, "What did my instructor say about this chapter or subject when it was assigned?" • Ask yourself, "What do I already know about this subject?" <p>Note: If it is helpful to you, write out these questions for consideration. This variation is called SQW3R</p>
When you begin to <u>R</u>ead:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for answers to the questions you first raised; • Answer questions at the beginning or end of chapters or study guides

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reread captions under pictures, graphs, etc. • Note all the underlined, italicized, bold printed words or phrases • Study graphic aids • Reduce your speed for difficult passages • Stop and reread parts which are not clear • Read only a section at a time and recite after each section
<p><u>Recite</u> after you've read a section:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orally ask yourself questions about what you have just read and/or summarize, in your own words, what you read • Take notes from the text but write the information in your own words • Underline/highlight important points you've just read • Use the method of recitation which best suits your particular learning style but remember, the more senses you use the more likely you are to remember what you read - i.e., <p>TRIPLE STRENGTH LEARNING: Seeing, saying, hearing-</p> <p>QUADRUPLE STRENGTH LEARNING: Seeing, saying, hearing, and writing!!!</p>
<p><u>Review:</u> an ongoing process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day One After you have read and recited the entire chapter, write questions for those points you have highlighted/underlined in the margins. If your method of recitation included note-taking in the left hand margins of your notebook, write questions for the notes you have taken. • Day Two Page through the text and/or your notebook to re-acquaint yourself with the important points. Cover the right hand column of your text/note-book and orally ask yourself the questions in the left hand margins. Orally recite or write the answers from memory. Make "flash cards" for those questions which give you difficulty. Develop mnemonic devices for material which need to be memorized. • Days Three, Four and Five Alternate between your flash cards and notes and test yourself (orally or in writing) on the questions you formulated. Make additional flash cards if necessary. • Weekend Using the text and notebook, make a Table of Contents -

	<p>list all the topics and sub-topics you need to know from the chapter. From the Table of Contents, make a Study Sheet/Spatial Map. Recite the information orally and in your own words as you put the Study Sheet/Map together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Now that you have consolidated all the information you need for that chapter, periodically review the Sheet/Map so that at test time you will not have to cram.
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- ❖ Get **organized**. **Keep a folder or binder** and a note book for each class. Put all your notes and papers in to your binder in an organized manner. For example, you can put it in to chronological order (make sure you date all your notes and handouts), by chapter, by sections (notes, handouts, homework, then tests). How ever you decide to do it be consistent and make sure it works for you. Also **keep a calendar or assignment book/page**. This way you can write down what you have to do for that class and when it is due so you don't miss assignments, forget to study for tests, etc. You may also want a place to **keep track of your grades**.
- ❖ Go to **class**.
- ❖ Do **homework**.

Hopefully these tips will get you on your way to becoming a successful student.



Studying a Foreign Language

The tips included here are practical strategies to help you study a foreign language.

- ❖ **Use Flashcards-** A powerful tool for learning vocabulary is the simple flashcard -- 3 X 5 cards with the foreign language (FL) on one side and English on the other. You should always have two separate stacks: new words and words you have already learned. Every once in awhile, go through the stack that you have already learned, just for review. This should go very quickly. If you find that you have forgotten a word, move it back to the other stack for more intensive study. You can always move it back to the "learned" stack later.

VERY IMPORTANT: ALWAYS CARRY SOME FLASHCARDS WITH YOU! This will allow you to study them at times when you normally would be doing nothing -- standing in line, riding the bus, and waiting for class to start, etc. You can turn "wasted" time into productive study time. The key is that you have your flashcards with you. Even one or two minutes is long enough to study 5-10 cards. Do this, and you will find your vocabulary expanding more quickly than you ever thought possible. And don't forget to study the flashcard "both ways," that is, sometimes use them with "English up," and sometimes use them with "FL up."

- ❖ **Use Colors-** Try writing vocabulary in different colors. For example, use blue for masculine objects and pink for feminine or red for irregular verbs and green for regular. You can also use colored note cards or paper. Another alternative is to use one color per unit so that you can mentally group like vocabulary together.
 - For spelling- When writing out vocabulary words, put all a's in one color, e's in another, etc. This takes a lot of time but has helped students with spelling.
- ❖ **Just Do It!** - Get active. Point to or touch objects as you say them and act out verbs. For example, make motions like you are eating and say the verb "comer" out loud.

- ❖ **Label it** – Tape little pieces of paper with the FL word on objects around you. Ex: put “la puerta” on your bedroom door.
- ❖ **Visually arrange words**- Put words that have something in common together. In one corner of your paper put words relating to sleep in another put the verbs that relate to sleep. Or Sketch a bed in the center of your paper and put all the words and verb around it. You might want to list masculine nouns on the left hand side of the paper and feminine on the right.
- ❖ **Write them out**- For some people repeatedly writing FL words and their English meaning works well. Try writing each pair of words 10-20 times. A fun way to do this is Rainbow writing. Write the word in Spanish and English. Then in a different color, write the word again on top what you just wrote.
- ❖ **Make up sentences to help you remember**- For example, the Spanish word for bear is ‘oso’. To help you remember you might say “A bear is OH SO big” or “There’s a mesa (Spanish word for table that looks like the English word mess) on the table.”
- ❖ **Make up songs**- create silly or serious songs or raps out of words or phrases you’re trying to learn. Make up a tune or use one you already know.
- ❖ **Record yourself**- Record yourself talking in the FL. Listen to your accent and make improvements. You can also quiz yourself by recording the words or phrases you’re learning. Pause between each one to give yourself time to think and say the words out loud.
- ❖ **Use friends and family**- Have someone quiz you. If they don’t speak the target language (or know how to pronounce it) have them give you the words in English. You respond with the word in the foreign language. Provide your partner with flash cards or a list of words in both languages.
- ❖ **Play games**- You can make up your own games or modify ones you already know. For example, you can play the memory game. Make pairs of index cards for each word- one in English, the other in the target language. Shuffle the cards together then lay them face down on the floor/table/desk in columns and rows like a grid. Turn one card over then try to remember where its pair is. Turn over the card you think it is. If they match pick them up and put them to the side. If they don’t match, turn them both face down in their original spots and start again.

- ❖ **Talk to yourself and you pets-** It's pretty simple. Talk quietly to yourself and/or your pets in the target language for more practice.
- ❖ **Write in your private journal.** – This is a good way to practice writing and also assures you a little more privacy. Don't worry if it is all correct. It's just for you. Just write. You can make corrections later if you want to.
- ❖ **Learn to read foreign text** – Read the text several times through. The first time just read it. Don't use a dictionary. The second time, look for KEY words to help you understand. If you cannot decipher their meaning from the text, look it up. DON'T lookup every word. This gets frustrating and wastes time. After you've looked it up, you might want to jot the word down in the margin or on a sheet of paper in case it shows up later in the text. You may even want to start a list for later study to help you build your vocabulary. The third time read for understanding. After each paragraph, ask yourself what you read, what the main points were, etc. If you can't comprehend the paragraph, look at the paragraph before it and after it for clues. Look up more key words. Try to understand as much as possible on your own. Don't rely on the dictionary.

❖ **Learn to memorize vocabulary**

The following methods are taken from Mind Tools website.
Explanation of Language Mnemonics

The Link Word Technique

The Link Word technique uses an image to link a word in one language with a word in another language. The following are examples of use of the LinkWord technique:

English: French vocabulary

rug/carpet - tapis - image of an ornate oriental carpet with a tap as the central design woven in chrome thread

grumpy - grognon - a grumpy man groaning with irritation

to tease - taquiner - a wife teasing her husband as she takes

In the washing.

The hundred most common words

Tony Buzan, in his book 'Using your Memory', points out that just 100 words comprise 50% of all words used in conversation in a language. Learning these core 100 words gets you a long way towards learning to speak in that language, albeit at a basic level.

- ❖ **Don't forget the Web!** – You can access FL radio, read articles, research countries, find online dictionaries, build your vocabulary with a word for the day, etc. Some sites like WWW.studyspanish.com offer online lessons and games to help you.

GOOD LUCK and KEEP STUDYING!