

THE GUIDE TO SELF-STUDYING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

In the so-called ‘third era of globalization’, humans interact more with people from different cultural contexts than ever before, and knowledge of foreign languages is a skill that gives you a lot of opportunities in different fields of life – career, education, socialization, etc. Considering this, working on the quality of learning foreign languages is very important. However, the aim is not to reduce the importance of the teacher in this process but, on the contrary, to make learning more conscious even when a student has the teacher’s support.

One of the most important things while learning a new language is to work on your motivation. Therefore, the first step is analyzing your motives and setting your goals. Why do you want to learn that language, and what would you like to achieve? Once you answer these questions, think of small rewards you can afford for every little progress. It can be

anything – from buying chocolate from the country where your target language is spoken to planning a trip to that country. Thinking about rewards is especially important in more stressful contexts, for example, when you must learn a language because of work or emigration.



People from different parts of the world¹

Learn new words in the context. When you find a new word or an idiom, remember the whole sentence or situation where it has been used. That is much better than memorizing a list of words without the context. When you have a whole sentence in your head, it will be much easier to use this word correctly and understand the structure of sentences in your target language. This is very helpful when learning languages with complex cases or tenses.

¹ Figure is available at Freepik (https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/international-migration-abstract-concept-vector-illustration-international-migrants-border-control-movement-people-leaving-country-application-form-travel-with-bag-abstract-metaphor_12468695.htm#query=diversity&position=18&from_view=search&track=sph&uuid=2394e7ea-4ab4-43c4-b3e7-150dd7774840)

Make an interesting life experience out of your language learning. Nowadays, finding a partner to practice your target language is very easy. All you have to do is explore online platforms such as Tandem, Italki, HelloTalk, or forums if you have more specific questions – HiNative, Reddit, etc. Or just share on your social media that you are looking for a partner for language exchange. Also, what might help is exploring your favorite topics in the target language – you can find podcasts that match your interests, follow influencers who are sharing content about your hobbies or profession, and read interesting blogs in a foreign language.

With this in mind, I would like to inspire you to learn a new language or keep working on the one you are already learning. As someone who speaks Serbian, Russian, Polish, English, and a little German and Slovene, I think investing time in learning a new language is never wrong. Learning a new language means understanding new people.

Exploring new cultures means better understanding humans in general. Understanding other humans means more empathy, and considering all the global challenges we are facing right now, that (more empathy) is exactly what we need. So, start small in creating a better world. Start by learning a new language.

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