

## 5 Tips for Learning a New Language



Learning a new language requires you to become familiar with the fundamentals. There's the accent, vocabulary, and grammar to consider. *Even if you took four years of a foreign language in high school, you likely realized that you still couldn't understand native speakers.*

Learning a new language can be tricky, but using it in a practical way can be even more difficult. Many try to learn a language from a book. However, languages are meant to be heard and spoken.

**Implement these tips to attain the fluency you desire:**

1. **Let go of the need to be perfect.** The truth is that you can be entirely understandable even if you butcher the language. Consider this sentence: *"Going store to the us with?"* The sentence is awful, but any English speaker can understand what the person was attempting to say.



- Keep in mind that you're probably learning a new language so you can communicate, rather than for the purpose of writing a novel.
2. **Think about how you learned English.** When you were a child, you didn't "try" to learn English. *You acquire language by hearing others speak around you.* You learned more through context than from someone intentionally teaching it to you.



- Try immersing yourself in the language and see what happens. Even try watching some foreign language videos on YouTube.

3. **Set a goal.** How much time can you spend learning a new language each week? How well do you want to be able to speak the language? A powerful work ethic can bring about dramatic results.



4. **Find a native speaker.** With the internet, a native speaker is only a few clicks away. *There are even language-exchanges, most notably websites, which will allow you to match yourself with others who speak your targeted language.*
- If you speak English and want to learn Russian, you can find someone that speaks Russian and wishes to learn English. Interpals.net is one such website.
  - There are many ways to take advantage of working with a native speaker. You can exchange emails and correct each other's mistakes. You can talk on the phone or through Skype, if you prefer video chats. When the time comes, you might even visit each other. The best part is that you'll have a tour guide and maybe even a place to stay!
5. **Try using pictures.** *One challenge you'll most likely encounter when learning a foreign language is attempting to translate everything into your native tongue.*
- For example, you might see a tree, think the word, 'tree', and then translate the word 'tree' into the new language.
  - Most people who are bilingual report that they think in whatever language they're speaking at the moment. One idea that can help you think in another language is to make flashcards.
  - *Anki (ankiweb.net) is a free program that allows you to make flashcards in a variety of languages and formats.* You can even include pictures. For example, you could put a picture of a tree on one side, and the foreign language word for "tree" on the other.
  - Anki even lets you set the controls to quiz you at specified intervals. The cards you're struggling with will be presented more frequently. You can also download decks of cards that others have already created.

***Learning a new language can be fun, challenging, and enriching.*** In many parts of the world, you'll find it's customary to know more than one language. Put these tips to good use and learning a new language will be easy and fun!