

## Tips on Studying a Foreign Language

Though many students may feel they have a mental block or even lack the aptitude for learning foreign languages, most can learn a second language IF they are willing to invest the necessary time.

Here are some practical suggestions for studying effectively, overcoming anxiety, and learning the grammar and skills necessary for success in foreign language classes.

### 1. Study every day!

A foreign language course is different from any other course you take. Language learning is cumulative: you cannot put it off until the weekend. Study for at least 5-10 minutes every day even if there is no homework.

### 2. Distribute your study time.

Focus on a different task/skill each time you study: vocabulary now, grammar tomorrow etc. Do not wait until the night before a Test/Quiz to study it all!

### 3. Attend and participate in class with out fail.

Class time is your primary opportunity for practice. Use this time to ask questions, get help, take notes, SPEAK in French.

### 4. Do your homework!

"Home lessons" are not optional. Homework is meant to reinforce and review the day's learning. Home lessons are the bridge from one day's class to the next. Avoid being lost or unprepared!

### 5. Make yourself comfortable in class.

Get to know your classmates so you will feel you are among friends.

### 6. Learn English grammar if you don't already know it.

Grammar is the skeleton of a language, its basic structure: you must learn it.

### 7. Practice for tests by doing what you will have to do on the test.

If the test will require you to write, then study by writing-including spelling and accents. Use the CD-ROM program and the [www.go.hrw.com](http://www.go.hrw.com) site for additional practice.

### 8. Develop a good attitude.

Have a clear personal reason for taking the class. Set personal goals for what you want to learn.

9. Get help if you need it.

Talk with your teacher. Study with a friend. DO NOT WAIT!

10. Get the big picture. Deal with uncertainty.

Don't worry about understanding everything. You won't. Try to figure out the main points and work from there.

11. Make mistakes work for you!

Leave perfectionism at the door; give yourself permission to make mistakes and learn from them.

12. Most importantly, TRY!

Believe in yourself. Go with your hunches. Take risks and seize every opportunity to learn.

Listening and Speaking are performance skills. Students in foreign language classes often have difficulty hearing and speaking because they are anxious about making mistakes. Give yourself permission to be spontaneous and to take risks.

- Participate silently in class when others are called on to speak. Focus on the task; don't worry about how you will do.

- If you feel nervous, relax by taking a few deep breaths. When called on, pause, relax, and give yourself time to respond.

- Study out loud! Don't mumble. Mimic the sounds of the language.

- When called on in class, say SOMETHING, even if it is wrong: with the help of your teacher you will learn from it. If you need a moment to think, repeat the question. If you don't know the answer, say *Je ne sais pas* or *Aidez-moi s'il vous plaît*.

- Use the clues around you to help you understand the task at hand.

- Before a listening activity begins, read through the task and brainstorm vocabulary. Remind yourself you will not understand everything or get all the information the first time through! *On y va!*