

Peace Corps

*Language learning for your
Peace Corps Service*

*A few things you always
wanted to know about*





A Few Things You Always Wanted To Know About

Language Learning for Your Peace Corps Service

Congratulations on your invitation to become a Peace Corps Volunteer! You are in for a life-changing experience of immersing yourself in another culture and language. This will be a personal and professional asset to you throughout your career.

A common theme we hear from many Volunteers and returned Volunteers is: “I wish I had prepared better for language training before I arrived.” If you’re reading this, you probably want to get a head start yourself.

In this guide, the Peace Corps Language Training Team will:

- Answer a few frequently asked questions ([Part 1](#))
- Share our best tips and tell you how to become a good language learner ([Part 2](#))
- Give you some specific resources ([Part 3](#))
- And offer language learning strategies, organized (for specific situations and also by type) (Parts [4](#) and [5](#)).

Best of luck in your new adventure as a Peace Corps Volunteer and language learner extraordinaire!



1. Frequently Asked Questions

How many languages will I study in Peace Corps language training?

Most Peace Corps Volunteers learn only one language, but some learn two, especially in West Africa or Latin America, where you might learn French or Spanish and a local language. PCVs usually learn a lot of one language and a little of the other.

What will Peace Corps language training be like?

The main difference between studying a foreign language in a traditional classroom and learning a new language in the Peace Corps is that you will learn to communicate *in* the language rather than talk *about* the language by discussing grammar rules or mistakes. Peace Corps language training is organized in terms of communicative tasks, which are what Volunteers need to be able to *do* with their linguistic and cross-cultural knowledge. Some examples of communicative tasks are buying food at the bazaar, asking for help in an emergency, and expressing gratitude. Vocabulary and expressions, cross-cultural knowledge, and grammar are all important tools Volunteers use to perform communicative tasks, and these are also taught as part of Peace Corps language training.

How many hours a day will I study a language?

Most programs teach language for an average of about three to four hours a day during pre-service training.

What help will I get for language study after I go to my site?

Posts usually provide tutoring funds and help Volunteers to set language learning targets throughout service. You will also receive guidance on selecting and working with a tutor. Many posts provide language workshops a couple of times over the two years of service. Many also provide language training materials and other resources.

How can I get a head start here in the U.S. before going to my host country?

We suggest you learn some basic communicative skills such as greeting others, introducing yourself, and giving and receiving thanks. If the language you will learn uses a different alphabet, it will really help you if you learn it in advance or familiarize yourself with the writing system.

We also suggest that you try to learn and practice the new language in context, rather than learning isolated sounds and vocabulary. You may find that many teach-yourself language

materials begin with a chapter on the isolated sounds of the language, but in reality, it is much more useful to learn and practice those sounds within a meaningful context. For example, instead of learning sounds such as “heh” and “lo,” you can practice those same sounds by saying “Hello,” and continuing with “My name is ...”

To practice reading in the new language in a context that’s already familiar to you, you can also set it as an additional language on your Google Drive. Find instructions [here](#).

There are numerous resources available to you: use books from the public library, YouTube videos, community college classes, and many free and for-pay online courses such as [Word2Word](#), [Open Culture](#), [Live Mocha](#), Oregon State University’s [E-campus](#), and the language survival kits at [Defense Language Institute](#). You can find more free language courses at [Language Surfer](#). There are many excellent online resources for the most common languages and your post should be able to give you suggestions.

Speaking of online resources, my friends are all using the latest apps to learn languages. Should I?

Many Volunteers have reported that the use of apps has improved their progress in language learning. Apps are convenient and, especially if gamified, can be fun. Some posts are encouraging the use of Duolingo. Other free apps are easy to find on the internet, and there are also some low-cost or subscription apps that you might want to consider investing in. They can be terrific tools, but for the most part, they are exactly that: tools. They are great for memorizing vocabulary and practicing grammar structures, and many even offer some listening practice, but they are not a substitute for practicing real communication in meaningful contexts. You learn to speak a language by speaking the language. Check out Part 3 of this guide for a list of apps and websites.

Will I ever be able to pronounce all those sounds?

It’s not essential that you pronounce every sound accurately, especially at the beginning of the language learning process when you are still concentrating on listening to and discriminating among the new sounds. You will be given chances in your classes to hear the sounds both in isolation and in a meaningful context, and to get practice in discriminating between minimal pairs (e.g., light/right, rise/rice). You’ll also have lots of practice producing the new sounds, preferably in communicative activities in the classroom. Research tells us that, in effective communication, what is more important than precise pronunciation of individual sounds will be your ability to reproduce stress and intonation patterns (the rhythm and the music of the language). If you can find native speakers, or sound tracks of native speakers, listen attentively to practice recognizing those patterns.

What can I do to maximize my language learning process?

In a nutshell: Use language learning strategies!

Studies suggest that a major factor in determining language learning success is explicit knowledge and use of appropriate strategies for completion of language learning activities. Language learning strategies are processes and actions you can consciously use to help you be a more efficient, motivated, and independent learner. With this metacognitive awareness, you progressively understand the similarities between previous and current learning activities, become aware of the strategies that led to your initial successes, and learn to monitor and regulate your performance on an ongoing basis on your path from a novice to advanced, and eventually to a superior speaker.

Language learning strategies can be categorized in many different ways. Two of the most popular to organize these strategies is for specific situations (see Part 4 of this guide) and by type (see Part 5).

Try at least one new strategy a week, if not more. Make notes on why that strategy did or didn't work.



2. Tips From the Peace Corps Language Training Team

Motivation: The most successful language learners are highly motivated. It is therefore important to identify the benefits of learning the new language. For example, you will need good language skills to serve effectively as a Volunteer, but you will also likely find it useful for professional or academic purposes after Peace Corps. After the “honeymoon phase,” you may have to find creative ways to keep yourself motivated. Ask other Volunteers how they are staying motivated, and share your ideas with them.

Exposure: Look for opportunities to hear or read the new language in a variety of contexts. Remember, you don’t have to translate what you are hearing or reading or to understand every single word. In addition to real-world situations, you can also find:

- Newspapers are a great way to pick up a few words and to learn more about your country of service. Websites such as www.onlinenewspapers.com help you find relevant newspapers.
- Movies that have been dubbed from English into the local language, especially if you already know the story.
- Songs, especially on YouTube. Listen repeatedly, and eventually sing along.
- Comic books, especially of stories you already know. You can see simple dialog with context.
- Billboards and ads. It’s a good way to pick up some vocabulary and common expressions.

Practice, practice, practice: Create your own practice situations: Discover and study all the language necessary to perform a particular task (for example, buy an appropriate gift to take to a special event), then go out and do it. Practice every day, even if (or especially when) you don’t feel up to it or you think you are too busy. Seek out situations where you are forced to use the new language to communicate. Put it on your calendar if you have to, but get out there and practice, even if it’s only for five minutes. You may be able to find another Volunteer who is willing to be your virtual study and practice buddy.

Feedback: Get feedback that lets you know if you were understood, or if you understood correctly. You can only get this feedback if you practice!

Encouragement and support: Look for others around you who like that you are learning the new language or who encourage you to try. Accept and ask for help when you are trying to understand or use the new language.

Trial and error: Try to understand or use the new language, make errors, learn from them, and try again. Making errors is not only a natural part of learning, it’s essential to learning. Encourage yourself to take risks, and know that every error is really a success! It’s an opportunity to not only improve your language proficiency, but also to begin or build relationships with others.

Recognize progress: Monitor your progress, note improvements, and be motivated to continue. Take a look at the [ACTFL Can-Do statements](#) online for suggestions of communicative goals you can set for yourself.

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Break it down: Take time to look at the individual elements of phrases, expressions, or grammatical patterns and how they are sequenced. You can use charts and other graphic organizers as both organizational and memory aids.

Patience: It takes time to develop language proficiency. Don't believe claims that you can master a language in a certain number of weeks/day/hours. It's a long process with plateaus along the way. Knowing that going in can help alleviate some of the frustration you may feel about not being perfect immediately!

Relevance: Don't waste your time memorizing random vocabulary, just because it's the next level of the app. If it's irrelevant, you probably won't use it again, so you will also probably forget it. Focus instead of finding the vocabulary and structures that you need in your daily life and work, and to integrate into your community.

Journal: Keep a diary in the new language of your personal thoughts or experiences. It doesn't have to be perfect, or even that good. No one else will ever see it. Review it every month or so, to see how far you've progressed.

Dialogs: Write dialogs that you can practice outside the classroom, and practice with a partner when you can.

Keep a language notebook: Write down new words and phrases as you first hear or read them, and record the context and an example of how the language was used. You can also choose a topic and find words in the dictionary and/or by asking language informants, then make a chart, a vocabulary notebook page, or other graphic organizer.



Characteristics of Good Language Learners

There are many variations on the theme of characteristics or qualities of a good language learner. This list created by Anita Wenden will give you some ideas on how to prepare to maximize your language studies. It is meant to be used as a guideline and a stimulus for reflection rather than a prescription for success.

Good language learners ...

- 1. Find a style of learning that suits them.** They are self-aware. When they are in a learning situation which they do not like, they are able to adapt it to their personal needs. They believe they can always learn something, whatever the situation. They also know how they prefer to learn and choose learning situations that are suited to their way of learning.
- 2. Are actively involved in the language learning process.** They take responsibility for their own learning. Besides regular language classes, they create opportunities to use the language. They know practice is very important. They are willing to take risks, to appear foolish if necessary.
- 3. Try to figure out how the language works.** They try to come to grips with the language as a system. They pay attention to form and look for patterns. They develop good techniques for improving their pronunciation and learning grammar and vocabulary. They welcome mistakes as a way of learning more about the language.
- 4. Know that language is used to communicate.** They pay attention to meaning. They have good techniques to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the early stages of their language learning they do not worry about making mistakes. They speak and try to become fluent. They look for opportunities to speak with native speakers.
- 5. Are like good detectives.** They are always looking for clues that will help them understand how the language works. They make guesses and ask people to correct them if they are wrong. They compare what they say with what others say. They keep a record of what they have learned and think about it--in other words, they monitor themselves.
- 6. Learn to think in the language.**
- 7. Realize that language learning is not always easy.** They try to overcome their feelings of frustration and their lack of confidence. They are able to come to terms with the affective demands of language learning, and know that they can manage their emotions. They are realistic in their setting of language study goals.
- 8. Are also good culture learners,** aware of the very close relationship between language and culture.
- 9. Have a long-term commitment to language learning.** They are realistic in realizing that it takes time and practice.

Wenden, A. 1990. "Helping language learners think about learning" in *Currents of Change in English Language Teaching*. ed. by Rossner and Bolitho. OUP.



3. Language Learning Resources

This is a very partial list of potentially useful apps and websites. Depending on how commonly taught your language is, you will probably find many more on your own!

[Duolingo](#) offers free, gamified, bite-sized vocabulary and grammar activities in more than a dozen languages.

[Nemo Apps](#) (iPhone, Android, and iPad) has both free and for-pay apps for practicing 34 languages.

[Guide to the Best Flashcard Apps](#) helps you make your own iPad flashcards.

[Quizlet](#) offers study tools to study anything for free.

[WeSpeke](#) is a free global platform for languages and cultural exchange, with users in over 170 countries who speak 103 native languages and are learning 101 target languages. You can be matched with a person in your target country with complementary language interests and common life interests. Once you are registered, you can text chat, audio chat, and video chat with natives to learn more about the country you will be visiting, the language (if applicable), and the culture.

[Lingua.ly](#) offers lessons in 10 languages and has more coming soon. You can find Smart Dictionaries, news feeds, progress reminders, memory games, and flashcards. Web and phone apps are available for download.

[GLOSS](#) has free lessons for independent learners from Defense Language Institute in many less commonly taught languages and others.

For learners who struggle with a new alphabet, [Declan Software](#) offers a pay-for product that may be useful. It's not great for learning the words themselves as it teaches vocabulary out of context, but it's good as a warm-up tool before a lesson to eliminate the frustration of checking back and forth to make sure you've copied everything correctly.

Find newspapers in dozens of languages at [newspapermap](#). Filter by language and choose a newspaper, and you'll find two links: one to the newspaper's website and another to the [Translate.Google.Com](#) translation of that website.



4. Language Learning Strategies for Specific Situations

Adapted from the inventory compiled by Andrew Cohen, Rebecca Oxford, and Julie Chi (2001); Center for Applied Research and Language Acquisition (CARLA), University of Minnesota.

To become familiar with the sounds in the target language

1. Practice target language sounds that are very different from the sounds in your own language to become more comfortable with them.
2. Look for associations between the sounds of a word phrase in the new language with the sounds of a familiar word.
3. Imitate the way native speakers talk.
4. Ask a native speaker about unfamiliar sounds or to repeat unfamiliar sounds that you hear.

To prepare to listen to conversation in the target language

5. Pay special attention to specific aspects of the language; for example, the way the speaker pronounces certain sounds.
6. Try to predict what the other person is going to say based on what has been said so far.
7. Prepare for talks and performances you will hear in the target language by reading some background materials beforehand.

To listen to conversation in the target language

8. Listen for key words that seem to carry the bulk of the meaning.
9. Listen to word and sentence stress to see what native speakers emphasize when they speak.
10. Pay attention to when and how long people tend to pause.
11. Pay attention to the rise and fall of speech by native speakers – the “music” of it.
12. Practice “skim listening” by paying attention to some parts and ignoring others.
13. Try to understand what you hear without translating it word-for-word.
14. Focus on the context of what people are saying.
15. Listen for specific details to see whether you can understand them.

For when you do not understand some or most of what someone says in the target language

16. Ask the speaker to repeat what they said if it wasn't clear to you.
17. Ask the speaker to slow down if they are speaking too fast.
18. Ask for clarification if you don't understand it the first time around.
19. Use the speakers' tone of voice as a clue to the meaning of what they are saying.
20. Make educated guesses about the topic based on what has already been said.
21. Draw on your general background knowledge to get the main idea.
22. Watch the speakers' gestures and general body language to help you figure out the meaning of what they are saying.

To learn new words

23. Pay attention to the structure of the new word.
24. Break the word into parts that you can identify.

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25. Group words according to parts of speech (e.g., nouns, verbs).
26. Associate the sound of the new word with the sound of a word that is familiar to you.
27. Use rhyming to remember new words.
28. Make a mental image of a new word. Example: '**verde**' (Spanish for 'green') may have an image of a '**green light**' filling the room or '**green paint** pouring out of a pail onto the floor.' Images are very individual.
29. List new words with other words that are related to it. Example: '**Sour** apple; **sour** face expression; sweet-and-**sour** soup.'
30. Write out new words in meaningful sentences. Examples: 'On the third day the unattended dough went **sour**, and I had to make some again.' 'Uncle Pip laughed at grandma, and everybody's mood turned **sour**.'
31. Practice new action verbs by acting them out (the principle of total physical response – TPR).
32. Use flash cards in a systemic way to learn new words.

To review vocabulary

33. Go over new words often when you first learn them to help you remember them.
34. Make lists of words and review them periodically so you do not forget them. For example, when you learn a set of 10 new words, try to review them every day for at least three days, then move to a weekly review schedule for three weeks and revisit the same list approximately a month later.
Interval repetition helps the memorization processes.

To recall vocabulary

35. Look for the meaningful parts of the word (e.g., prefix) to remind you of the meaning of the entire word.
36. Make an effort to remember the situation where you first heard or saw the word or remember the page or sign where you saw it written.
37. Visualize the spelling of new words in your mind.

To make use of new vocabulary

38. Try using new words in a variety of ways.
39. Practice using familiar words in a variety of ways.
40. Make an effort to use idiomatic expressions in the new language.

For speaking

41. Practice saying new expressions to yourself.
42. Practice new grammatical structures in different situations to build your confidence level in using them.
43. Think about how a native speaker might say something and practice saying it that way. An instructor or tutor may help you in these situations.

To engage in conversations

44. Regularly seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers.
45. Initiate conversations in the target language as often as possible.

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46. Direct the conversation to familiar topics.
47. Plan out in advance what you want to say.
48. Ask questions as a way to be involved in the conversation.
49. Anticipate what will be said based on what has been said so far.
50. Try topics even when they are not familiar to you.
51. Encourage others to correct important errors as you speak.
52. Try to figure out and model native speakers' language patterns when requesting, apologizing, or complaining.

For when you can't think of a word or expression

53. Ask for help from your conversational partner.
54. Look for different ways to express the idea, like using a synonym or even a gesture.
55. Make up new words or guess if you do not know the right ones to use.
56. Use gestures as a way to try to get the meaning across.
57. Switch to your own language for a short moment and enhance the verbal message with gestures if you know that the person you are talking to can understand what is being said.
58. Read a story or dialog several times until you understand it.
59. Pay attention to the organization of the text, especially headings and sub-headings.
60. Make ongoing summaries of the reading either in your mind or in the margins of the text.
61. Make predictions as to what will happen next.

For when words and grammatical structures are not understood

62. Guess the approximate meaning by using clues from the context of the reading material.
63. Use a dictionary to get a detailed sense of what individual words mean.

Reading strategies

64. Try to find things to read for pleasure in the target language.
65. Find reading material that is at or near your level.
66. Plan out in advance how you are going to read the text, monitor to see how you are doing, and then check to see how much you understand.
67. Skim a text first to get the main idea and then go back and read it more carefully.

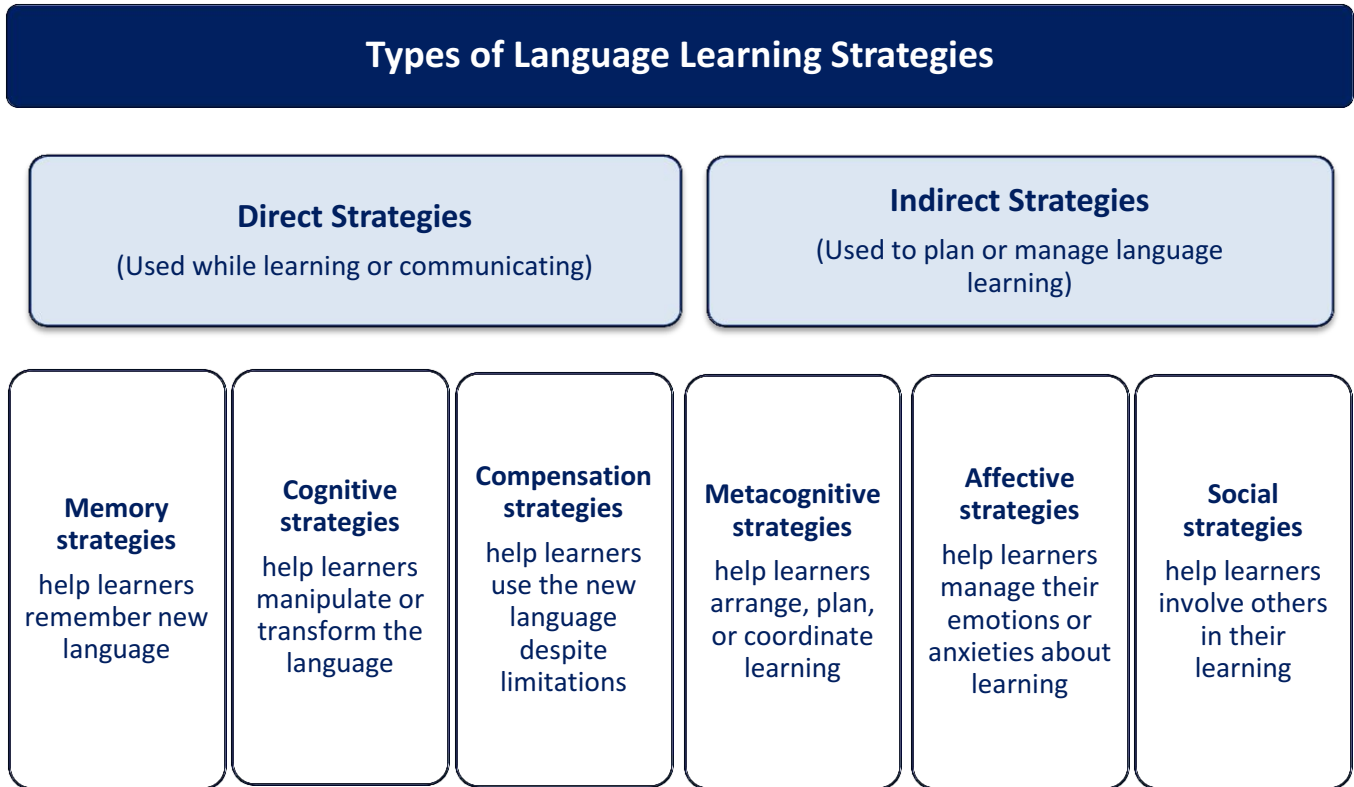
To boost your confidence

68. Encourage yourself by writing or saying positive statements to yourself in order to feel more confident about using the new language.
69. Give yourself a reward for doing something new or difficult in the new language, or for completing a unit of study.
70. Practice imaginary situations before you have to do it for real.



5. Language Learning Strategies by Type

The descriptions of language learning strategies on the following pages are organized into these categories.



Source: Oxford, R. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

For more information about language learning strategies, the following are excellent resources:

- [CAL Digest: Language Learning Strategies](#)
- Oxford, R. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle. Andrew Cohen and Susan Weaver (1990).
- *Styles- and Strategies-Based Instruction: A Teachers Guide*. Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), University of Minnesota.

DIRECT LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Memory Strategies

Create mental linkages

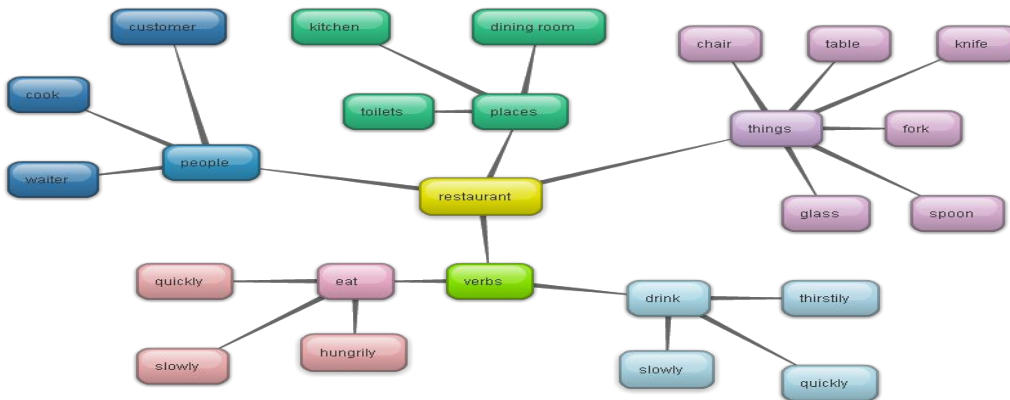
1. **Grouping:** Group words according to topic (e.g., weather), category (e.g., fruit, vegetables), opposites (e.g., friendly/unfriendly), or parts of speech (e.g. nouns, verbs).
2. **Connect words that go together:** List words with other words that go with them (e.g., take a bus, take a bath, take a break).
3. **Place new words in context:** Write new words in sentences rather than alone, or write out conversations using new words or grammar before you expect to have the conversation.
4. **Labeling:** Draw pictures of objects or situations and label them, or label objects at home or work.

Apply images and sounds

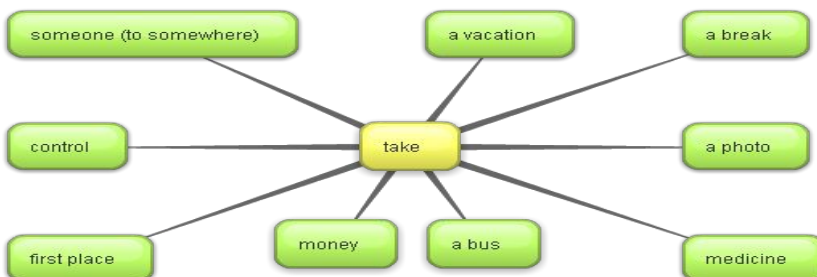
5. **Use semantic mapping:** Make a semantic map (also called spidergrams, mindmaps, and wordwebs) to show how words related to a particular situation are connected to each other.

Examples of Semantic Mapping

Restaurant Vocabulary Mindmap



"Take" Collocation Mindmap



6. **Use keywords:** Use the sound of a word to make a mental image to help you remember the meaning (e.g., “dom” is Russian for “house,” so I make a mental image of a house with a dome on top).
7. **Represent sounds in memory:** Associate the sound of the new word with the sound of a word that is familiar to you (e.g., “brat” is the Russian word for brother, and my brother is a brat: an ill-mannered annoying child).

Review well

8. **Structured reviewing:** Review vocabulary or other language areas at carefully spaced intervals: 10 minutes, one hour, one day, two days, one week, one month, etc.

Use action

9. **Act it out:** Practice new language by miming it and saying it to yourself at the same time (e.g., mime opening the door or eating).
10. **Physically move or reorganize:** Move or reorganize things to remember new information. For example: Write new words on cards and move them from one pile to another as you learn them. Write verbs on cards and put make two piles according to the verb type. Or organize different types of language items in separate notebook sections.

Cognitive Strategies

Practice

11. **Repeat it:** Say or do something again and again. Repeat new vocabulary, expressions, or sentences, either mentally, out loud, or in writing.
12. **Practice sounds or the writing system:** Copy or imitate spoken sounds, words, or phrases, focusing on word or sentence stress, the rhythm and intonation of the language, or pausing. Copy or imitate written letters, words, or phrases.
13. **Recognize patterns:** Notice and imitate how and when native speakers use routine expressions (e.g., notice and imitate how native speakers use expressions such as “How are you?” or “It’s time to eat/go/get ready”).
14. **Use your natural surroundings:** Practice new language in realistic settings whenever you can. Start conversations on the bus, at the market, in the street, or outside your house. Listen to the radio or TV while you’re at home. Read product labels, children’s books, and newspapers.

Receive and send messages efficiently

15. **Try to get ideas quickly:** Listen or read quickly to find key words or expressions that give the main idea such as a listening carefully to the first and last sentences in any discussion,

looking first at the newspaper headline (skimming). Or listen or read quickly to find specific information such as tomorrow's temperature, a bus departure time, or the final score in a soccer match (scanning).

Analyze

16. **Analyze deductively:** Use general rules and apply them to new target language situations. For example, if adding *-ed* to a verb such as "work" makes the past tense, then I will try adding *-ed* to all verbs to form the past tense.
17. **Analyze expressions:** Figure out the meaning of a new word or expression by breaking it down into parts you can identify (e.g., un-drink-able: un = negative, able = ability).
18. **Translate:** Plan what you want to say in English then translate it into the local language.
19. **Transfer:** Apply your knowledge of words, concepts, or structures to the new language (e.g., recognize *telephone* means *telefon*).

Create structure for input and output

20. **Take notes:** Write down the main idea or specific points (e.g., take notes during a community meeting).
21. **Highlight:** Use a variety of emphasis techniques: underline, star, or color-code to focus your attention on important aspects of your language learning notes.

Compensation Strategies

Guess intelligently

22. **Use linguistic clues:** Use context to figure out the meaning of what is heard or read. For example, if you hear two people greet each other and say, "Long time no see," they will probably then talk about when they last saw each other and what they're doing now.
23. **Use other clues:** Use the speakers' tone of voice, body language, or gestures as clues to the meaning of what is being said.

Overcome limitations

24. **Use English:** If you don't know the word or expression in local language, try saying it in English.
25. **Get help:** If you don't understand something or know how to say or write something, ask your conversational partner.
26. **Use mime or gesture:** If you don't know how to say something, try mime or gesture.
27. **Select the topic:** Direct the conversation to one or more topics that you are familiar with and that you have enough vocabulary and grammar to discuss (e.g., ask about your conversation partner's family).
28. **Adjust the message:** Use simpler vocabulary or grammar (e.g., if you don't know the word for "stool," say "chair.")

29. **Invent words:** Make up new words or guess if you don't know the correct terms. For example, if you don't know the word for "eyeglasses," say "eye helper."
30. **Say it in other words:** If you don't know a word or expression, use circumlocution. For example, if you don't know the word for pen, say, "the thing you write with," or mime writing.

INDIRECT LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Metacognitive Strategies

Center your learning

31. **Link known material:** View a key concept, principle, or set of materials in relation to an upcoming language task or activity and associate it with what you already know. For example, before buying a train ticket, list train travel vocabulary, question forms, and money vocabulary.
32. **Delay speaking to focus on listening:** Focus primarily on listening until your language skills are better. For example, the first time you go to a community meeting, plan to sit quietly and listen to the conversation rather than participating.

Arrange and plan your learning

33. **Learn about language learning theory:** Find out more about how language learning works and then use this information to improve your own language learning.
34. **Organize:** Organize your schedule, physical environment, and language learning resources so that they best suit your needs.
35. **Set goals and objectives:** Either on your own or in collaboration with others, set language learning targets.
36. **Plan for a language task:** Analyze a language task to identify what you need to do and what you already know—to find out what you need to know. For example, if you have to make a presentation, think about what you need to say, and from there identify what you don't already know and need to learn.

Evaluate your learning

37. **Self-monitor:** Identify errors in understanding or producing the new language either while or after you are communicating.
38. **Self-evaluate:** Evaluate your progress in the new language in relation to targets or goals. Use semantic maps to review the meaning of new vocabulary items and to connect them mentally to other similar items both in your first and the new languages.

Affective Strategies

39. **Be positive:** Encourage yourself by writing or saying positive statements to yourself in order to feel more confident about using the new language.
40. **Reward yourself:** Give yourself a reward for doing something new or difficult in the new language, or for completing a unit of study.

Social Strategies

Ask questions

41. **Ask for clarification or verification:** Ask the speaker to repeat, explain, summarize, slow down, or give examples.
42. **Ask for correction:** Ask your conversational partner to correct you.

Cooperate with others

43. **Work with other language learners:** Improve your language skills by practicing with other learners (e.g., meet once a week to role-play situations).
44. **Work with native speakers:** Work with native speakers or other proficient speakers (e.g., ask community members what street signs or product labels mean).

Empathize with others

45. **Develop cultural understanding:** Learn more about the culture in order to understand why people communicate in a particular way. For example, notice who speaks first in a group – the youngest or the oldest person.