

COMMUNICATION

My language learning autobiography

LEVEL

Intermediate (B1)

NUMBER

EN_B1_1121X

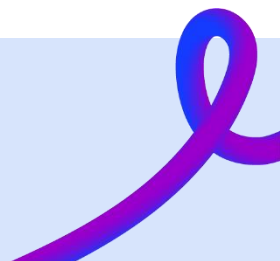
LANGUAGE

English



Learning outcomes

- I can talk about the languages I speak and give details on how well I speak them.
- I can use the present perfect continuous with 'for' and 'since'.





Warm-up

**How many languages
do you speak?**



**At what age did you
start learning English?**

A multilingual workplace

Read the text and **answer** the questions below.

Simone: How long have you been learning English, Henrietta? You sound almost like a native speaker!

Henrietta: Since I was at school. But I only really started to improve when I got my first job. It was important to become more fluent in English. How about you? Which languages do you speak? Everyone I've met at the company so far is more or less multilingual! It's very impressive.

Simone: I speak French at home with my family and English at work. I also know the basics in German, but I'm a bit rusty!

Henrietta: My German is the same! I can follow when people speak to me, but I struggle to make myself understood. I can get by in restaurants and shops, but that's about it.



1. How do Simone and Henrietta know each other?
2. Why does Henrietta sound like a native English speaker?
3. Are Simone and Henrietta confident about their German language skills?



Match the words or phrases to their definition

1 My boss is **multilingual**. It's very impressive!

2 My brother can **get by** in English.

3 She doesn't speak much Italian. She only knows **the basics**.

4 You sound almost like a **native speaker**.

5 I can **follow** the news in Spanish when I listen to the radio.

a This person has good listening skills but they are not likely to be a strong speaker.

b This person only knows very simple words and phrases.

c This person can speak the language like someone who grew up speaking it.

d This person speaks more than two languages.

e This person can use simple language in the most common situations.



Simone said her German is **rusty**.

Henrietta said she finds it hard **to make herself understood** in German.

What does **rusty** mean in this context?
Do you think Henrietta speaks German **fluently**? Is she better at listening or speaking?



Making yourself understood

**Think of a situation when you
struggled to make yourself
understood in English!**

**What did you do to make it easier to
communicate?**

How long... + present perfect continuous

Read the example sentences and fill in the gaps in the blue boxes.

How long have you been learning English?

How long has she been working in an English-speaking company?

I've been learning English since I was three years old.

She's been working in an English-speaking company for almost fifteen years now!

- We often use the question

_____ ...?

+ **present perfect continuous**

when we want to know the length of time (**duration**) someone has been doing an **activity**.

- We use **for** and **since** to say how long we have been doing an activity:

_____ : a period of time

_____ : a point in time



for and since

Match the sentence beginnings on the left with the endings on the right.

1 My friend has been learning German **for...**

2 I've been improving my Spanish **since...**

3 He's been trying to improve his English **for...**

4 I've been speaking French a lot more confidently **since...**

5 She's been thinking of moving to Italy **since...**

a **she was in high school.** She's finally saved up enough money to move to Rome!

b **a long time.** He wants to make himself understood at work in English.

c **I started my current job,** because I don't have a choice – it's not enough to just get by.

d **more than six years.** He almost sounds like a native German speaker!

e **last year.** Now I can follow my favourite Spanish TV series.



Ask a classmate!

Form a question using ***how long*** and one of these phrases. Then, **ask** one of your classmates!

At Lingoda



In your town or city



Talking about languages in a job interview

Read the text and answer the questions below.

Theo: The successful candidate must speak English more or less fluently and have conversational German. How would you describe your level in these two languages?

Maxine: Well, I have no difficulty communicating with German clients about my work. I definitely don't speak the language perfectly, but I'm always trying to get better. I'm also pretty much fluent in English.



1. Who is the interviewer? Who is the interviewee?
2. Does Maxine have the right level of English for the job?
3. Can Maxine communicate conversationally in German?



Describing your language skills

Have you ever been asked about your language skills in a job interview before?

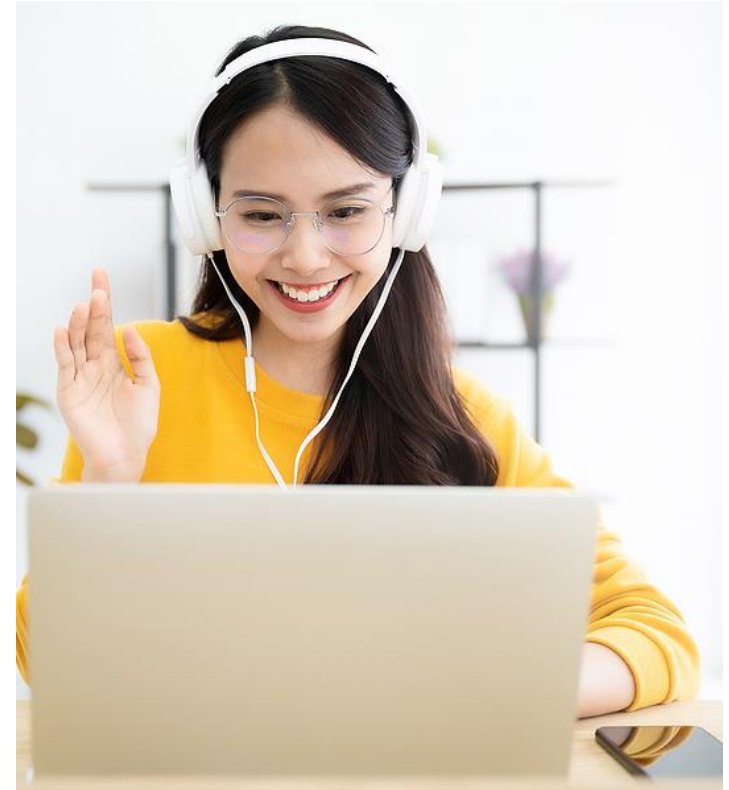
In a job interview, which languages would you say that you are *more or less fluent* in?



Why do you want to learn English?

1. **Rank** the reasons for learning English in order of importance for you.
2. **Compare** your ranking with a partner in your breakout room.
3. **Share** your partner's top and bottom choice with the class.

- 1 To help me make friends or build relationships with people.
- 2 Because learning this language is important for success in my profession.
- 3 To help me understand more about different cultures.
- 4 Because I enjoy learning.
- 5 Because I want to live in a country where they speak this language.





Talking about your language learning experience

Give your language learning autobiography, using as much new language from the lesson as possible. You can use the words and prompts below to guide you.



Native speaker

The basics

Multilingual

*I try to follow the
news in...
because...*

*Pretty much
fluent/more or less
fluent*

Rusty

*I need to be able
to get by in...
because...*

*I have been + -ing
for/since...*

*Make myself
understood*



End of the lesson

Idiom

*I watched that film you recommended last night. It **wasn't my cup of tea**.*

Meaning: not something one enjoys or likes



Additional practice



Unscramble the sentences

1

spoken

long

Italian

for

has she

how



2



since

spoken Italian

a child

she

she has

was

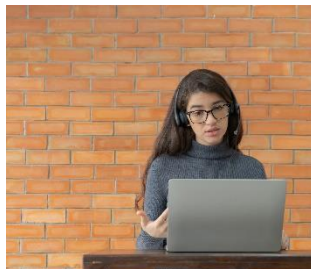


Make sentences about these four languages

Use the **vocabulary** in the red box below to **describe** how well you speak French, Turkish, Mandarin and Portuguese. You can also use **other vocabulary** from the lesson.



French



Turkish



Mandarin



Portuguese

*I speak conversational French.
I can understand Turkish when it is
written down.*

*My Mandarin is a little rusty.
I can follow Portuguese when I hear it.*

- get by in
- know the basics
- hold a conversation
- make myself understood
- more or less
- pretty much



Your language skills in different situations

Describe your **English** skills in each of the situations below. Is your restaurant vocabulary a little rusty? Is it tricky for you to write an email?

I have no difficulty following directions in English.

I get by speaking English with my friends.



Situations

- following instructions
- shopping
- ordering food
- reading letters
- writing work emails
- talking to friends
- visiting the bank
- public speaking
- talking on the phone
- watching a film

Vocabulary

- rusty
- pretty much
- more or less
- no difficulty + *-ing*
- make myself
- understood
- get by
- written
- tricky



Categorise the vocabulary

Read the sentences in each box. Do they **describe** a beginner, intermediate or advanced speaker of the language? **Discuss** your answers – it is possible you might **disagree**.

My Spanish is very rusty.

I can more or less follow a conversation in French.

I can hold a conversation in Afrikaans.

He can make himself understood.

They speak conversational Greek.

I am bilingual.

He is pretty much fluent.

I can get by in Dutch.

I only know the basics in Italian.

I have difficulty understanding every word in Kurdish.

Beginner

Intermediate

Advanced



Learning a language outside the classroom

Read the sentences in the boxes below and **fill the gaps**. There can be **more than one** answer. Do you do any of these things to improve your English outside your Lingoda classes? **Discuss** your answers and **explain** why you do these things, or why you **don't** do them.

I put English

_____ around my _____.

I use the English

_____ at _____ museums.

I help my

_____ learn.

I play

_____ with English speakers.

I listen to English

_____.

I learn new words and phrases at _____.

I cook using English _____.

I follow English

_____ on my phone's GPS.

I _____

to English-speaking countries.

I use my

_____ in English.

I only speak English with my _____.

I read

_____ in English.

I _____ for an English-speaking company.

I watch

_____ in English with _____.

I _____ myself on new words I have learned.



Answer key

P.4

1. They work together 2. She learned English at school and also improved a lot at her first job 3. No, they are not confident about their German skills

P.5

1. (d) 2. (e) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (a)

P.8

Blue box 1: *How long...*? Blue box 2: for = a period of time; since = a point in time

P.9

1. (d) 2. (e) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (a)

P.11

1. Theo is the interviewer; Maxine is the interviewee
2. She has the right level for the job
3. Yes, she can

P. 18

1. How long has she spoken Italian for?
2. She has spoken Italian since she was a child.



Summary

Vocabulary for describing your level

- **Beginner:** rusty, the basics
- **Intermediate:** conversational, get by, follow, make myself understood, pretty much/more or less, hold a conversation
- **Advanced:** fluent, bilingual, multilingual

Present perfect continuous

- We use the present perfect simple and the present perfect continuous to talk about things we started in the past and still do today.
- We often use the present perfect continuous to emphasise the length of time (duration) we have been doing an activity.

How long have you ...?

- We use the question *how long + have you... + present continuous* to ask about the length of time (duration) of an activity

for and since

- **for:** period of time *I've been singing with the choir for ten years now.*
- **since:** point in time *I've been learning English since I was at school*



Vocabulary

the basics

to get by

multilingual

bilingual

to follow

How long have you been learning English?

rusty

to make oneself understood

fluently

more or less

pretty much

to hold a conversation

conversational

to have no difficulty communicating

