

12
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Whatever method you choose, stick to it and follow it to the letter

In many cases this makes all the difference. A well-designed course adheres to a strict teaching method and rhythm. In developing and adjusting the method, the course designers have closely studied the results obtained by many of our learners, and have taken into account their relevant comments and criticisms, so make the most of the experience of those who have gone before you and follow the recommendations closely!

Of course, it's not easy to judge a method before you've tried it, it makes sense to choose one that offers a money back guarantee.



Make a point of studying every day

Language learning is rooted in the idea of constant repetition. For

example, if you learn 10 expressions and then interrupt your studies, this is what happens: the next day you will have forgotten one of them, the following day two, the day after that 3, and so on. But if you study regularly, everything becomes easier and the "wastage" extremely limited.



It is absolutely essential to pronounce the French text out loud

Get rid of the idea once and for all that you can learn to speak "in your mind". Repeat out loud. Nobody's spying on you! When you learn a language you gain the respect and admiration of others. A French person who makes a few mistakes when speaking English is never an object of scorn. Quite the contrary!



Listen to French radio stations

This is an excellent way to "immerse" yourself in the sound of the language. Don't try to understand; just let the music of the language do its work. Take the metaphor of a jigsaw puzzle. All of us can put in the four corner pieces of the puzzle without any trouble. Next come the sides, followed by the vividly colored parts, and finally the most difficult pieces. When you listen to the radio, you are really putting together the pieces of a sound puzzle. You start with the easiest parts, move on to the slightly more difficult sections and end up with the parts which require more practice.

To sum up: don't try to understand; don't even listen attentively. Just let the sounds wash over you and you will make progress in spite of yourself!



Read «parallel-text" books

(English on one side, French on the other, or books which have been simplified for language learners.) Start off with the bilingual books. Since the French and English texts are printed in parallel (usually on facing pages), it's very easy to switch from one language to the other without losing the thread.

Later on, you can start reading simplified French texts. These are usually classic novels (a guarantee of quality) in which some of the more complex words have been replaced by their modern or everyday equivalent.

French	English
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Look at English films with French subtitles

Yes, that's right - ENGLISH films with FRENCH subtitles, and not the other way round! Following the film in English and concentrating on the French subtitles is an excellent exercise. And in the era of the DVD nothing could be simpler! You'll get even better results if you experiment with a film you've already seen.



Look for information on French websites

When you do a search for information on line, make sure to include French sites in your search. Nine times out of ten you'll find what you are looking for.



Read food packaging

A very good way of increasing your vocabulary is to read the instructions, etc. on food packaging and wrapping. The ingredients, for example, are often written in several languages and it's always a surprise to come across the French equivalent of words you use all the time.



Use a good dictionary

Of course, this won't help you to speak the language but it's an excellent way of learning shades of meaning. Keep a good dictionary at hand when you read, but don't use it unless you come across a term whose meaning you can guess or sense but which you are unable to put into words. Only look up French words - not English words you don't know how to translate.



Pay particular attention to the intonation and rhythm of French...

...so different from English with its well-known "tonic accent". A good language course will bring out the "music" of the language. The French tonic accent is quite different from its English counterpart. In English, each word has one stressed syllable, meaning that one syllable of the word is pronounced more emphatically. In addition, individual words can be stressed in order to show particular emphasis on them. In French each syllable of a word, and each word, is pronounced with equal emphasis.



Look for ways of turning the vocabulary activity into a game

For example, you might want to draw up lists of verbs on cards. You could write the infinitive on one side of the card and some of the other forms on the back, etc. A good language method should offer a wide choice of games.



Last and most important of all, never put off till tomorrow what you can do today! Start right away - you won't regret it!

These tips come to you courtesy of the Centre Européen de Formation aux Langues (European Language Learning Centre), French4U and formez-vous.com