

# HOW TO REALLY LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE OR FURTHER DEVELOP AN EXISTING ONE

As Nelson Mandela stated, *"If you talk to a person in a language they understand, that goes to their head. If you talk to them in their own language, that goes to their heart."* Learning a second, third or fourth language has benefits greater than just a resume booster—it allows for a deeper connection with others, fosters cultural understanding, enhances memory and problem-solving skills, and expands one's view of the world.



## Do

- Study the material
- Get a language buddy
- Talk to your roommates, local friends, host families, members of the community, and people on the street
- Watch movies and television in the host language
- Listen to the country's music
- Hang out in your community on the weekends

## Don't

- Don't be afraid to make mistakes
- Don't be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone
- Don't criticize others' mistakes
- Don't expect others to speak English
- Don't skip class
- Don't underestimate the power of non-verbal & body language
- Don't travel to other countries every weekend with a group of Americans
- Don't just hangout with people within your program (Americans)

## Tips for Success

- Find a program offering language partners and conversation hours
- Discuss your goals with your Resident Director
- Try to live with a host family or local students
- Join a club or campus organization
- Get involved with a hobby you currently have
- Look for an internship
- Get involved with volunteer opportunities

## How to Prepare

- Study the special nuances of the language in your region
- Learn basic phrases and customs before you arrive
  - Yes, no, please, thank you
  - "Where is the bathroom?"
  - "Can you help me?"
  - "Excuse me."
  - "I am sorry."
  - "I don't speak (insert language here)."
- Know how to interpret directions
- Purchase pocket-sized language/travel books available at most bookstores
- Computerized dictionaries are available
- Apps are great

## Some Wise Words to Consider

- “English is a funny language; that explains why we park our car on the driveway and drive our car on the parkway.”  
–Anonymous
  - *New languages can be tricky—don’t give up.*
- “One man’s frankness is another man’s vulgarity.”  
–Kevin Smith
  - *This is very important to consider in some countries.*
- “Slang is a language that rolls up its sleeves, spits on its hands and goes to work.”  
–Carl Sandburg
  - *Learning the slang of a region can be a very instrumental tool in communication.*
- “It’s a strange world of language in which skating on thin ice can get you into hot water.”  
–Franklin P. Jone
  - *Sometimes people say the wrong thing, and it’s unavoidable and to be expected—don’t let this intimidate you.*

## Notes

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