



# 10 Tips for World Language Courses

This sheet is a compilation of advice/tips from faculty members in the language departments as well as advice from students who have been successful in world language courses.

1. “Always practice vocabulary! You may be very efficient in grammatical structure, but that knowledge is useless without a vibrant vocabulary to support it.” Try to learn the vocabulary that you would use around the house in the language you’re studying. Some example phrases include, but not limited to: “Please, pass the salt.”; “May I use your bathroom?”; “Have you seen my car keys?”
2. “Study out loud vocabulary and grammar rules. You have to listen, speak, imitate, memorize and practice. When you study out loud, you are creating more ways for the brain to process and store information.”
3. “Don’t be afraid to mess up. Many students avoid speaking up in class or practicing their language skills in public because they are scared to make mistakes. Recognize that mistakes happen and that you’re going to get better with practice!”
4. When thinking in your native language ask yourself, “how would I also say this phrase in the language I’m studying?” If you can’t directly translate it take time to look up ways that you could convey that same message in the language you are learning.
5. “Make it fun. You are learning a valuable life-skill by learning another language. You should enjoy the experience of gaining this knowledge and talent. If you have a great attitude with regards to your language learning experience you won’t feel you are studying but, rather, refining your skill.”
6. If you review every day for a short amount of time, it is a lot easier to memorize important grammar concepts and vocabulary. “Explore the culture related to the language. If you are in a Spanish course, listen to music from Latin America; if you are taking an American Sign Language course, watch a movie with actors who are deaf or one that highlights Deaf culture. This exposure to the language through entertaining media will help you connect with the language.”
7. Always prepare before class by reading the content and doing homework assignments. “Don’t complete homework just to complete homework—really understand the concept that is trying to be emphasized during that lesson. Chances are that it is an important concept to improving your language and you’ll be thankful in the long run.”
8. “AVOID online translation sites. Yes, they help you finish the assignment or project; however, you are only hurting yourself when it comes to exam time if you’ve only relied on these tools throughout the semester. Instead, try online dictionaries like WordReference.com for excellent word translations and definitions.”
9. Study in groups. You’ll help each other better your language by correcting mistakes, getting practice speaking spontaneously (critical thinking skills), and being an active listener.
10. Utilize resources! For example, the Spanish writing/speaking center, French conversation corner, American Sign Language conversation corner, quizlet for vocabulary, your TA/professor & etc.

